

# **Disney series: From *Star Wars* to *Kiff***

Copyright 2023 Burkely Hermann  
Published by Burkely Hermann on Internet Archive

# Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)...page 2

[Chapter 1: "Star Wars Resistance": Diversity Shines Through in a Galaxy Far, Far Away](#)...pages 3-10

[Chapter 2: "Kim Possible" Is A Fun Comedy and Action-Adventure](#)...pages 11-19

[Chapter 3: "Tron: Uprising": A Cyberpunk Drama That Is Out of This World](#)...pages 20-30

[Chapter 4: Why "The Ghost and Molly McGee" Is A Fun Animated Series!](#)...pages 31-36

[Chapter 5: "Amphibia" Emphasizes Chosen Families and Self-Acceptance](#)...pages 37-42

[Chapter 6: "The Owl House" Showcases Diverse Stories and LGBTQ Representation Review](#)...pages 43-52

[Chapter 7: "Phineas and Ferb": An Animated Series All Can Enjoy](#)...pages 53-60

[Chapter 8: "Hamster & Gretel": A Series With Promise](#)...pages 61-66

[Chapter 9: Star Wars: The Bad Batch Review](#)...pages 67-72

[Chapter 10: Kiff Review](#)...pages 73 to m

[Concluding Words](#)...page 55

# Introduction

This 79-page e-book consists of ten chapters. It brings together my reviews of [\*Star Wars: Resistance\*](#), [\*Kim Possible\*](#), [\*Tron: Uprising\*](#), [\*The Ghost and Molly McGee\*](#), [\*Amphibia\*](#), [\*The Owl House\*](#), [\*Phineas and Ferb\*](#), [\*Hamster & Gretel\*](#), [\*Star Wars: The Bad Batch\*](#), and *Kiff*, along with [\*concluding remarks\*](#). These chapters were posted on my personal WordPress blog [in November 2022](#), [December 6, 2022](#); [December 10, 2022](#); [December 14, 2022](#); [December 26, 2022](#); [January 2023](#); [February 15, 2023](#); [February 19, 2023](#); [March 2023](#); and [April 2023](#).

These articles were published either on *Pop Culture Maniacs* or *The Geekiary*. I did some spell-check and other revisions to ensure this text made sense, and to correct any errors that I made in the original text, which comes to over 20,000 words! Otherwise, the text is almost the same. Happy Reading!

- Burkely

## Chapter One: "Star Wars Resistance": Diversity Shines Through in a Galaxy Far, Far Away



What if a spy became a mechanic as "cover" for his espionage, but he was terrible at both jobs? *Star Wars Resistance* answers that question. This series follows the adventures of Kaz, the friends he meets along the way, and the challenges he and his friends face. Whether people are out to get them or they're facing rough and tumble situations, it's an animated series like no other- not even other Star Wars series.

*Star Wars Resistance* is the creation of Dave Filoni, a director, screenwriter, actor, producer, and animator, best known for his work on animated series in the Star Wars franchise. *Star Wars Resistance* is a 3D animated action and sci-fi comedy that pulls you in from the first episode. It lasted for two seasons, with relatable characters and exciting adventures. As a warning, this recommendation discusses some spoilers for *Star Wars Resistance*.



*Yeager, Kaz, and Neeku on the Colossus*

*Star Wars Resistance* centers around a pilot named Kazuda "Kaz" Xiono (voiced by Christopher Sean), who is recruited by Resistance commander Poe Dameron (voiced by Oscar Issac) to spy on the villainous First Order. He is taken in by Jarek Yeager (voiced by Scott Lawrence), the owner of Yeager's Repairs, a mechanics shop on the refueling station *Colossus*. While there, he meets a talented technician named Neeku Vozo (voiced by Josh Brener) and an aspiring pilot Tamara 'Tam' Ryvora (voiced by Suzie McGrath), who are part of the same shop.

While staying on the *Colossus*, Kaz meets a variety of interesting characters. One is Hype Fazon (voiced by Donald Faison). Hype is the leader of Ace Squadron, the fighter unit protecting the station. There's also a pilot named Torra Doza (voiced by Myrna Velasco), Station Captain Imanuel Doza (voiced by Jason Hightower), and a space pirate spy named Synara San (voiced by [Nazneen Contractor](#)).

With the help of these new friends, he faces a high-ranking First Order officer, Commander Pyre (voiced by Liam McIntyre), and the First Order Security Bureau agent Tierny (voiced by Sumalee Montano). Over the course of the series, Kaz changes from an awkward kid to someone more confident in himself- and a *somewhat* more skilled mechanic.

Other recurring characters include Orka (voiced by Bobby Moynihan) and Flix (voiced by Jim Rash) who run the Office of Acquisitions aboard the station, tavern keeper Aunt Z (voiced by [Tovah Feldshuh](#)), pilot Freya Fenris (voiced by Mary Elizabeth McGlynn), space pirate captain Kragan Gorr (voiced by Gary Anthony Williams), space pirate Drell (voiced by David Shaughnessy), and pilot Jace Rucklin (voiced by Elijah Wood). Astromech droids like R1-J5 and BB-8 help characters when needed, whether fighting enemies, receiving messages, unlocking doors, assisting in piloting ships, or gathering information. Others such as 4D-M1N help in a command capacity.

*Star Wars Resistance* stands out due to its diverse cast in contrast to the [overwhelming Whiteness](#) of *Star Wars* films, apart from well-known characters like Lando Calrissian, who was first voiced by Billy Dee Williams and later by Donald Glover, Samuel J. Jackson's Mace Windu, and John Boyega's Finn. McGrath is a British actress with Jamaican and British roots, with her British accent strongly shining through in her voice acting as Tam. Faison and Lawrence are Black men. Montano has Filipino, Thai, Chinese, and German ancestry. Velasco comes from a big Mexican family and Contractor is of [Indian descent](#). Sean, on the other hand, has [Japanese](#), Irish, Spanish and [German](#) roots.

In an April 2019 interview, Velasco [described herself](#) as a "Mexican girl from L.A." She was amazed by the fandom's reaction to Torra, noting that unlike other series, *Star Wars Resistance* shows what characters do in day-to-day life. The series itself is set before the newest trilogy of *Star Wars* films. Torra could be argued to be Mexican-inspired or Mexican-code as Velasco voiced a Latine character named Carla Delgado in *Elena of Avalor* and Jessica Cruz in *DC Super Hero Girls*, who is of Mexican and Honduran descent.

Many of the voice actors have experience in the field, especially in all-ages animated series, but *Star Wars Resistance* is the first animated role for McGrath. She has said that in voicing Tam, she felt like she was in London's East End, due to the melting pot on the *Colossus*. She also described Tam as fun to play and said there is an "[element of a young urban, Londoner](#)" in the character.

In this [anime-inspired](#) animated series, Tam is more than a "[feisty mechanic](#)". She's a hard worker who wants to become a racer, a rule-follower who has a strong moral compass. This is challenged in the second season of *Star Wars Resistance* when the *Colossus* is revealed to be a

space ship and Tam, feeling betrayed by Yeager and Kaz for not disclosing their ties to the Resistance, decides to join the First Order.

[McGrath described](#) Tam's decision as giving her the ability to be a pilot. There are challenges as she goes from being a mechanic to being a soldier. Even so, she keeps her morality and her heart. Tierney, another brown-skinned character, can manipulate Tam to stay in the First Order by playing to her insecurities, using her as an asset to try and take down the *Colossus*.

Slowly over the second season Tam begins to change her mind about the First Order, even helping out Kaz and Neeku when they didn't realize it, even as both still have hope in her. Rucklin, who is still angry at Kaz for destroying his star fighter, tries to tell Tam to stay the course. Related to this is Griff Halloran explaining why he left the Empire, under which Doza was his commanding officer, in the episode "The New World". To him, fighting for the Empire wasn't worth it in the end.

As for Kaz and Neeku, they generally believe in Tam, while Yeager sees her as turning her back on them and joining the other side. Kaz even agrees with Yeager that they would have to take her out. In the first part of the Season 2 finale, she is horrified to see the destroyers firing on the people of Aeos while Rucklin remains loyal. In the second part, she tells Tierney that Yeager gave her a family, unlike the First Order, and she wants to be with her chosen family instead of space Nazis.

While the first season of *Star Wars Resistance* takes place on *Colossus* where the characters must face off against the Warbirds, a gang of space pirates, the First Order, and its military occupation of the platform, the second season raises the stakes. The *Colossus* is on the run from the First Order, barely escaping space battles before jumping to hyperspace. The platform remains a home for a gaggle of people and a found family for others, like the stowaways Kel (voiced by Antony Del Rio) and Eila (voiced by Nikki Soohoo) and Torra, the daughter of Captain Doza. In the process, they write off mutinous space pirates, save Resistance recruits, and Tam continues to have doubts about her role in the First Order, even after moving up the ranks.

The villains of *Star Wars Resistance* are starkly painted as evil without reproach. Stormtroopers are shown saluting the destruction of Kaz's homeworld and nearby planets, killing "countless innocents who called the system home." The First Order itself is clearly depicted as a fascist military junta. They were based on the idea of Nazis who fled to Argentina after World

War II [reforming into a group](#), admiring the work of the Galactic Empire. The First Order have been described as fascist [but smarter](#) than one would expect, ruling through fear rather than love. They're [the equivalent](#) of neo-Nazis or what [some](#) have called "space Nazis." General Hux, leader of the First Order, [is modeled](#) after Hitler.

There is an interesting contrast between the individuality emphasized on the *Colossus* and in the Resistance, and the First Order's mentality that the individual does not matter. Tam herself tries to mix those ideologies together, although it makes her superiors angry. While Pyre isn't happy when Tam literally saves those on the bridge of the Star Destroyer from being hit by a bomb fired by Kaz, she is promoted to second squadron commander by Tierny, to which she smiles and salutes. However, she shows doubts in firing on unarmed transport shuttles, while Tierny continues to have faith in Tam.

This makes it no surprise that Tam disagrees with Rucklin, a clear toady of the First Order, who shoots down a shuttle full of Resistance recruits. We even see Kylo Ren demanding that all Resistance cells be crushed, getting annoyed at Tierny for her "failures" and saying they don't "tolerate the weak." He is the only character to be shown using the Force in the whole series, in contrast to other Filoni productions which feature Jedi or Sith. There is no sympathy for these characters. After a Star Destroyer explodes in the final episode, with countless First Order troops aboard, including Rucklin, not one person bats an eye about the deaths of these soldiers.

The music of *Star Wars Resistance* is composed by [Michael Tavera](#), a Latine composer who did music for *Stretch Armstrong and the Flex Fighters*, *The Awesomes*, and many other shows. The series music is based on themes by John Williams. Every episode begins with an uplifting instrumental opening track. The series features other music set to the mood of the animation. However, the show's comedy is more prevalent than the music at times. It is mostly manifested by Kaz, often a goofball, and Neeku, who is very nerdy and has good chemistry with Kaz.

Unlike other Star Wars series such as *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, romance is not a big part of the series apart from Captain Doza trying to protect his daughter, and his attempts to meet his wife, Venisa (voiced by Tasia Velenza). Kaz seems to have a crush on two women, Torra and Synara, and they may have crushes on him, especially in the case of Torra. However, they never kiss, and their relationships never move beyond them being friends. In some ways, this allows



the series to avoid falling into predictable romantic themes and plotlines that too many animations embody, often in a heterosexual manner rather than a queer one.

There are even recurring LGBTQ characters: Orka and Flix. Both are gay and are in a romantic relationship. This is only hinted throughout the series, but was confirmed [by Justin Ridge](#), an executive producer of *Star Wars Resistance* [who said](#) they are "absolutely a gay couple and we're proud of that." Moynihan, who voices Orka, [also said](#) that Orka and Flix "love each other" and are his "favorite little couple" and hoped the characters return in the future. However, some criticize this portrayal as being too subtle and say it should be more overt.

Flix and Orka are among the small number of LGBTQ characters in Star Wars animated series. Cassie Cryar and Ione Marcy, who appeared in one episode of *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, were revealed by Lucasfilm creative executive Pablo Hidalgo as "[written as a couple in a relationship](#)." Some accounts like [Star Wars Queer Watch](#) on Twitter track LGBTQ content in Star Wars. The latter noted the lack of LGBTQ characters in animated series, like *Star Wars: The Bad Batch*, which Filoni is also creator of, although they have a headcanon that Omega is trans or intersex.



*Tam and Tierney on a First Order ship*

Filoni has been involved with many other series besides *Star Wars Resistance*. He co-created *Star Wars Rebels*, storyboarded *Star Wars Forces of Destiny*, was a development artist, supervising director, writer, and producer for *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, and is an executive producer, director and writer of *The Mandalorian*. He was also a storyboarder on countless series and voiced various Star Wars characters in the aforementioned series, like Bo Keevil in *Star Wars Resistance*.

*Star Wars Resistance* was well received by critics, some calling it "[primed with potential](#)," having a "[brighter, more colorful palette](#)" than other series, and an animation style [which stands out](#) among the traditionally computer generated animations for other Star Wars series. As a result, the series was nominated for Primetime Emmy Awards in 2019 and 2020 in the Outstanding Children's Program category, and [won the Saturn Awards prize](#) for the Best Animated Series category in 2019.

The second season plotline of *Star Wars Resistance* which has Tam joining the First Order reminded me, in some ways, of Cassandra being manipulated by the Enchanted Blue Fairy in the third season of *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*, also known as *Tangled: The Series*. I wish that *Star Wars Resistance* had been extended into another season and had an order of 60 episodes like *Tangled*, instead of 40 episodes spread across two seasons (21 episodes in the first season and 19 episodes in the second).

Specifically, I would have liked to see Tam's struggle to find a place in the First Order expanded. Maybe she could have become totally immersed in the ideology to the shock of the protagonists, like having her oversee the destruction of a system of planets by the Starkiller Base, [a la Ash turning evil in Final Space](#). Maybe Tam wouldn't be redeemed in the end, as this series did or as *Tangled* did with Cassandra. Or perhaps they could have stuck with the existing storyline and had another season about Tam readjusting to the *Colossus* and having to face the First Order.

Even though it would have required some reworking, it could have been interesting to have Kaz as a female character instead a male character, as many of the Star Wars series have male leads while female characters are relegated to supporting or secondary roles, and at certain points, this series played into that, unfortunately.

Although we do not know all the behind the scenes of *Star Wars Resistance*, Filoni and other executive producers, Athena Portillo, Justin Ridge, and Brandon Auman, [told CBR](#) that

they had always planned to tell a story that was two seasons long, developing a roadmap from the beginning for the series. Even so, Portillo and Ridge confirmed that they are willing to revisit the series in the future. This means that *Star Wars Resistance* is not like *Final Space* which was unceremoniously [cancelled by Warner executives](#). It also means that anger from [some fans](#) and [split opinions](#) on the show had nothing to do with the show's length, which is a positive. In the end, the series aired from October 7, 2018 to January 26, 2020, with both seasons available on Disney+ after February 2020.

Personally, I enjoyed *Star Wars Resistance* more than Filoni's other productions like *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, which often seems like it comes out of the pages of a military history book or the war stories of soldiers in a battlefield, apart from the final episodes of the series, or even *Star Wars Bad Batch*. It was much more enjoyable than *The Mandalorian*, a series for which I sat through the first episode and was thoroughly unsatisfied with what I saw. It seemed like a shoot-em-up western that resembled a tired, boring [Clint Eastwood film](#) at times.

*Star Wars Resistance* also has more diversity in its cast than recent shows like *Masters of the Universe: Revelation* or *Tangled*. The latter series has a brown-skinned characters like Andra, voiced by Tiffany Smith, [a multiracial actress](#), and features Black actors like Kevin Michael Richardson, Tony Todd, Phil LaMarr, Cree Summer, Dennis Haysbert, and Method Man, and a Latine man of Mexican descent, Danny Trejo. The former series has dark-skinned characters like Lance Strongbow (voiced by James Monroe Iglehart) and Adira (voiced by Kelly Hu). However, both of those series have White-majority casts.

With *Star Wars Resistance* currently at the end of its series order, now is the time to watch it on Disney+, Disney Now, or elsewhere. It's a great choice for a weekend binge session.

© 2021-2023 Burkely Hermann. All rights reserved.

## Chapter 2: "Kim Possible" Is A Fun Comedy and Action-Adventure



What if an ordinary high school girl saves the world daily, but is more afraid of her life as a teenager than any villains plotting to take over the world? *Kim Possible* answers that question in this well-regarded comedy-adventure series.

*Kim Possible* is an all-ages animated comedy, action, and adventure series created by Bob Schooley and Mark McCorkle. It ran for 87 episodes across four seasons, with episodes ranging in length from 11 to 22 minutes. Even though *Kim Possible* aired from 2002 to 2007, and many shows have come and gone since then, it shines in its own way. As a warning, this recommendation discusses some spoilers for *Kim Possible*.



*Kim faces off against Shego*

*Kim Possible* centers on its titular hero (voiced by Christy Carlson Romano), a high school student who fights crime and saves the world at the same time. In fact, she finds being a teen even tougher than fighting villains like Dr. Drakken (voiced by John DiMaggio) and Shego (voiced by Nicole Sullivan). Kim is helped by her childhood friend, Ron Stoppable (voiced by Will Friedle), his naked mole rat, Rufus (voiced by Nancy Cartwright), and a computer genius named Wade Load (voiced by Tahj Mowry).

The story is mainly told from Kim's perspective, as she tries to balance her life as a crime fighter and a teenager in high school. Major supporting characters include Kim's parents, James (voiced by Gary Cole) and Ann Possible (voiced by Jean Smart), and the "tweebs" as Kim dubs them, Jim (voiced by Shaun Fleming) and Tim (Spencer Fox), who are Kim's younger brothers. Her brothers are a little like Phineas and Ferb, and have a bigger role in helping Kim and her friends in the show's fourth season.



Throughout *Kim Possible*, Kim faces off against Bonnie Rockwaller (voiced by Kirsten Storms), who is equivalent to Mandy in *Totally Spies!*. She is a rival classmate that is inconsiderate and is the opposite of Kim.

Kim is also helped by one of her best friends, Monique (voiced by Raven-Symoné), who helps her achieve a healthy work-life balance. In the fourth season, Monique designs Kim's new mission suit and even gets Kim a new pirate uniform in one episode. Since she knows a lot about fashion, she is akin to Tomoyo Daidouji, who designed all of Sakura Kinomoto's outfits in *Cardcaptor Sakura*.

When Kim, Ron, Rufus, and Wade, known collectively as Team Possible, aren't battling Drakken and Shego, they fight a variety of other villains such the half-monkey/half-man Monkey Fist (voiced by Tom Kane), Scottish golfer Duff Killigan (voiced by Brian George), German evil scientist Professor Dementor (voiced by Patton Oswald) and the wealthy father-son team, Señor Senior, Sr. (voiced by Ricardo Montalbán and Earl Boen) and Señor Senior, Jr. (voiced by Néstor Carbonell). The latter two are villains only because they are bored.

Since the show is for all ages, it doesn't have any gratuitous violence nor any mature themes present in series like [Human Kind Of](#), [Inside Job](#), and [Disenchantment](#). Despite this, the show is still strong with funny jokes and situations. Even though it ended 15 years ago, the humor holds up.

The dialogue of *Kim Possible* is fast-paced and meant to cater to adult viewers, along with some visual jokes. This makes it like *Phineas & Ferb*, which has a spy subplot between a crime-fighting platypus and an evil scientist. *Kim Possible* is different because Drakken was formerly a classmate of Kim's father, making for intriguing stories throughout the series.

Unlike other Disney productions, the series is not very musical, meaning that there aren't songs in almost every episode as is the case for its more recent shows like *Elena of Avalor*, *Milo Murphy's Law*, *Mira*, *Royal Detective*, and *Sofia the First*. Even so, there are occasional songs throughout the series. Furthermore, the theme which opens every episode ("Call Me, Beep Me!," sung by Afro-Cuban actress and singer Christina Milian) gets you in the mood to watch each episode.

The characters, especially Kim and Ron, develop over the course of *Kim Possible* and realize who they are as people. This makes the viewer more invested in these characters and want to watch more episodes. Each plot, even if a simple one, is fascinating and pulls you in,

building the story and making you care about what happens next. The series doesn't take itself too seriously, which makes it even more appealing.

Much of the comedy in *Kim Possible* comes from Drakken's hair-brained schemes or Ron's antics. Only Kazuda Xiono [in \*Star Wars Resistance\*](#) and Oscar [in \*The Proud Family\*](#) rival Ron's goofiness. He matures through the series. In the process, he becomes more romantically attracted to Kim, while she is attracted to him. He remains afraid of monkeys, making Monkey King his main arch-foe, while gaining what is known as the "mystical monkey power."

I have not seen the James Bond films that the series parodies, nor that many spy films, but that didn't make me less interested in the show. I did see similarities between *Kim Possible* and the more recent [Carmen Sandiego](#) series, which has a similar set-up. I wouldn't be surprised if *Kim Possible* had somehow influenced that show. Unlike that show, *Kim Possible* has storylines which criticize celebrity culture, boy bands, consumerism, school popularity, fast food industry, fashion industry, corporate world, and not accepting other people.

*Kim Possible* is different from other shows in that Kim does not follow any stereotypes about women, which are often ingrained within and manifested by female characters. She can easily serve as a role model for people, just like Carmen Sandiego in the new series about her, or Rapunzel in *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*. This is because Kim has a loving family and supportive friends. She has a group of people ready to stand by her and help no matter what, even doing missions for her if she is too sick.

Kim is a bit of an optimist, as made clear by her slogan that she can "do anything." This comes to a head in some episodes as she begins to realize that she can't do everything, and she should have others help her if she is in trouble.

Like Adora in the award-winning series, *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*, or Carmen Sandiego, Kim has no secret identity. Instead, everyone knows her name and who she is, which makes her vulnerable at times. Even so, she is still able to travel the world and fight evil wherever, while keeping her social life back in the town of Middleton.

The voice actors of *Kim Possible* are well-known for other shows, like *Futurama*, *The Simpsons*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. The show has an air of authenticity since Romano was [only 16 years old](#) when she took the role of voicing Kim, meaning that she was maturing as the show was moving forward, just like Kim herself. This is similar to what Abbi Jacobson, who

voices the protagonist [in \*Disenchantment\*](#), said about her voice acting for Princess Bean in that series.



*Shego talks to Kim after saving her from Warmonga in Season 4*

One character in *Kim Possible* stands out: Shego. Although she is a villain and a criminal mercenary, [some have argued](#) that she is a feminist icon because, like Kim, she is no damsel in distress. She is a powerful woman who often makes sarcastic remarks and can have an abrasive personality at times. She can stand face-to-face with Kim and is her match in more ways than one, as she can be cunning and ruthless. In fact, she is perhaps one of the smartest characters in the series, even able to take over the world in the 2003 film, *Kim Possible: A Sitch in Time*.

Sullivan, her voice actress, delivers her lines with such precision that it makes you love Shego that much more. Unlike other villains, Shego is never shown killing anyone in the series, even if she views human life in a callous way.

She is clearly a badass and has a moral compass, unlike other villains. Even though others respect her, she could care less for them. She would rather read villain magazines, file the nails on her gloves, paint her nails, listen to the latest pop music, or go on vacation. She is unique in that she possesses green energy which can be generated from her hands. She is also as agile



and fit as Kim. Their fights are just as epic as the sword fights in *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, *Star Wars Rebels*, and *Star Wars: Clone Wars*.

This has led some fans to ship her with Kim. Kigo has [over 400 fanfics](#) on Archive of Our Own. In the show's canon, however, Shego has a romantic relationship with Drakken following the conclusion of the show and is shown crushing on various men throughout the series. In the show itself, Kim and Shego have mutual respect, even though they are rivals. Kim even worries when Shego becomes "good" in a Season 4 episode and occasionally working with her.

Shego is very popular with fans, garnering thousands of stories, cosplays, and fan art. Even voice actress Amber Romero, who voices Parsley in *High Guardian Spice*, [gave a nod](#) to naming her cat "Shego."



*Ron and Kim talk on the phone at the beginning of Season 4*

The show's staying power is a testament to the fans. After the airing of the show's first three seasons and 2005 film, *Kim Possible Movie: So the Drama*, production on the series was halted by Disney executives. The success of the film convinced executives to renew the series for a fourth and final season, giving the series another 22 episodes, which Schooley called a "[bolt](#)

[out of the blue](#)." The series makes clear that fans have the power to push for a show's continuation and can convince executives to change their minds.

The fourth season has a different tone than the previous seasons, as Kim and Ron are in a romantic relationship, something which started at the conclusion of the 2005 film. Much of the season is focused on that, and the strain it puts on both. The theme song is the same, but the opening sequence is different than the one used in the first three seasons.

In the season, Kim wears a battle suit, is nimbler, and is in her last year of high school, as are Ron and Monique. She also deals with the tweebies in school as they are now freshmen in her high school. Wade falls for Monique, Kim gets her own car, tries out a new crime-fighting outfit, and attempts to get Ron to eat a balanced diet.

Other Season 4 episodes focus on raising a young sibling, a shapeshifting villain, pirates, living history, job insecurity, voice-activated technology, social isolation, robots, mentorship, pneumatic tubes, babysitting, mind control, information control, lost pets, nannies, roleplaying games, high school graduation, alien invasion, and genetic mutation.

Beyond that, some of my other favorite characters include Camille Léon (voiced by Ashley Tisdale), Electronique (voiced by Kari Wahlgren), Motor Ed (voiced by DiMaggio), Will Du (voiced by B. D. Wong), Master Sensei (voiced by George Takei), Yori (voiced by Keiko Agena), and Zita Flores (voiced by Nika Futterman).

By Season 4, however, Yori's crushing on Ron has come to end, as Kim and Ron are dating. She is like a strong female character in anime, and she respects Ron for who he is and is a skilled fighter. Camille is a terrible slimeball, but her ability to shapeshift into anyone makes her a worthy adversary. Motor Ed is an intriguing, but terrible, character not because of his often use of the word "seriously" or that he plays air guitar. Rather it is since he is a male chauvinist who has an eye out for beautiful women, like Shogo, who understandably wants nothing to do with him.

Most reviews of the series are positive, but some are more critical. For instance, Lyn Mikel Brown [in Girlfighting](#) was dismayed at Kim for promoting a thin and beautiful heroine as an "average girl," the reliance on Ron, her biggest threat as Bonnie, and Kim set against other girls. This has some truth to it. Kim is [a pretty and smart action hero](#) and more cartoons have said that all body types are beautiful, not just those who are thin and athletic. However, Brown is forgetting that one of Kim's closest friends is Monique.

Additionally, there's nothing to say that Kim wouldn't have more female friends, since she has a network of people across the world who owe her favors. Some have argued that Kim is bisexual and have done so in some fanfics. They've even extended the same to Ron or to Shogo.

The series has a bit more diversity, even with two White protagonists, than some more recent Disney series like *Tangled* and *Phineas & Ferb*. Wade's voice actor, Lowry, is part Afro-Bahamian and Monique's voice actor, Raven-Symoné, is a Black woman. Although both have important roles in the first three seasons, they have even bigger roles in the show's fourth season, with both going directly on missions - more for Wade than Monique. Additionally, Kevin Michael Richardson (as "Slim" Possible) is a Black man, Roz Ryan (as Wade's mother) and Sherri Shepherd (as M.C. Honey) are Black women.

There is other diversity in the cast. Adam Rodriguez (as Burn) is of Puerto Rican descent, Brian George (voice of Professor Acari) is of Indian descent, Gedde Watanabe (as Professor Robert Chen) is of Japanese descent. Clyde Kusatsu (as Nakasumi), Lauren Tom (as Miss Kyoko), and John Cho (as Hirotaka) are Japanese, while the late Montalbán was Mexican, and Carbonell is of Cuban descent.

Despite this, the show does not feature any outward LGBTQ characters even though Raven-Symoné, Wong, and Takei are gay and part of the show's cast. The closest we have are characters cross-dressing: Professor Dementor wearing a dress to trick Kim, Ron and Wade dressing up as women in one episode, or Mr. Barkin wearing a dress on multiple occasions. If the show was to get a fifth season or was rebooted, hopefully this would improve, with complex and captivating LGBTQ characters, more diversity in the cast, and having protagonists in college like the later seasons of *Totally Spies!*. Some additional racial diversity in the series would also be a plus.

*Kim Possible* continues to remain popular, garnering a crossover episode in *Lilo & Stitch: The Series* in August 2005, and a live-action film entitled "Kim Possible" in 2019. Even so, it is very unlikely that it will return, regardless of the recent revival of *The Proud Family*. This is because the series ended on a declarative note, like the final episode of *Futurama*, except that in this case Kim and Ron graduate from high school, and the story is not starting over. However, [some](#) have pushed for another season.

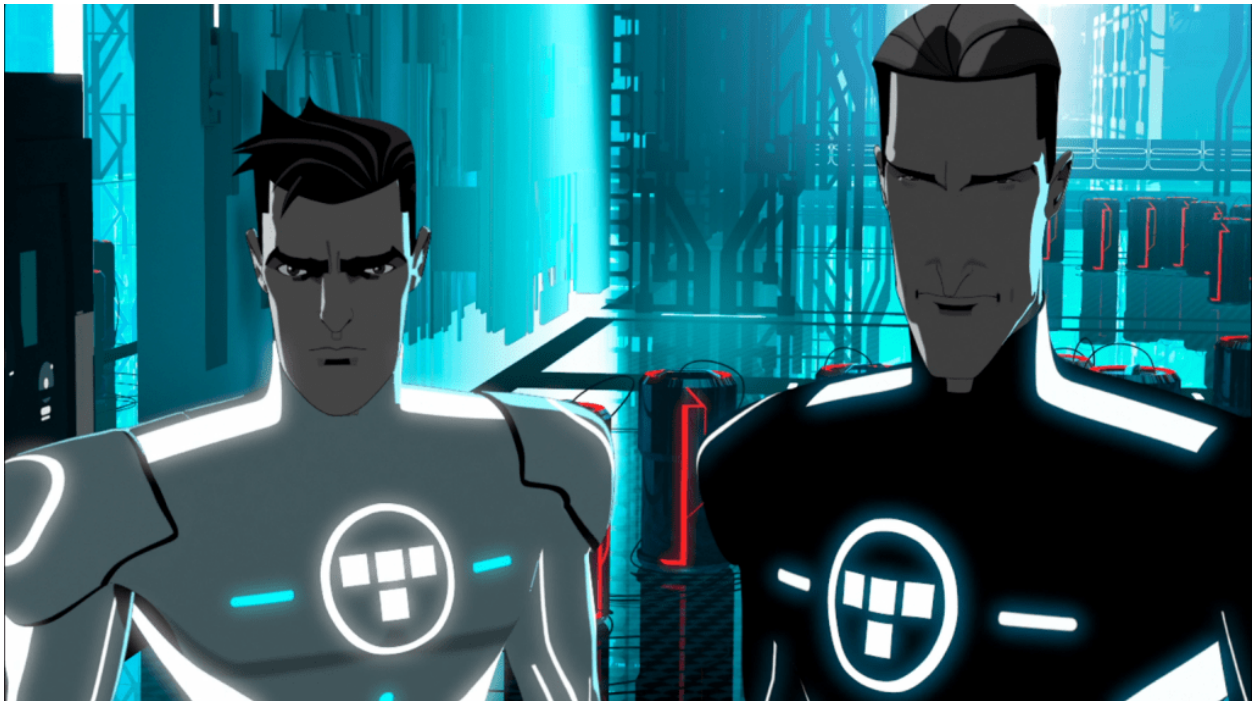
Is it any surprise that *Kim Possible* was nominated for Annie Awards, Primetime Emmy Awards, Kids' Choice Awards, and Daytime Emmy Awards? In 2005, the series won a Daytime

Emmy for "Outstanding Achievement in Sound Mixing," specifically for live action and animation. Of course, awards aren't everything, but the fact it was nominated for 15 awards between 2002 and 2008 says something about the series.

Even though *Kim Possible* ended over 14 years ago, it has staying power now and, in the years to come. It can currently be watched on Disney+, where it is [not in chronological order](#), or through DVDs of all four seasons which can be checked out from your local library.

© 2022-2023 Burkely Hermann. All rights reserved.

### Chapter 3: "Tron: Uprising": A Cyberpunk Drama That Is Out of This World

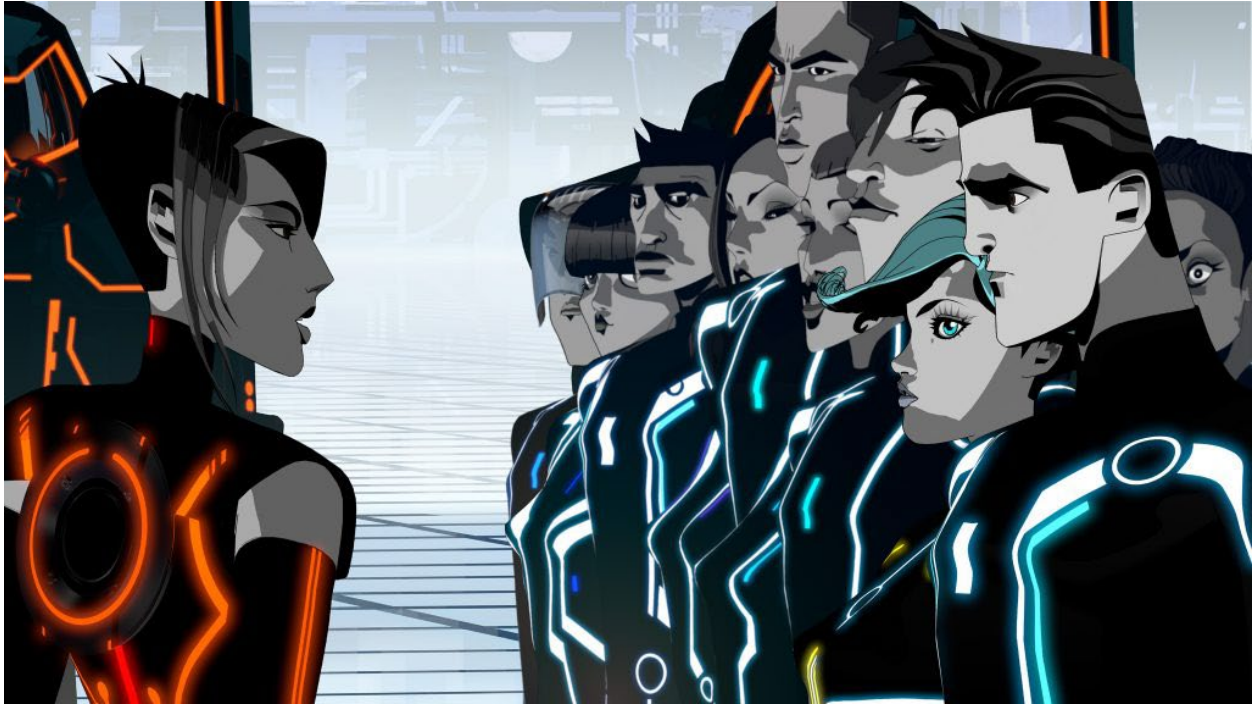


*Beck and Tron [Screenshot: Tron: Uprising]*

What if a program, in a virtual world, could start a revolution against their overlords? *Tron: Uprising* tries to answer that exact question. This series follows Beck, a program trained by a legendary warrior to take down the military dictator and his oppressive forces by any means necessary.

*Tron: Uprising* is developed by Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz and is based on the 1982 film, *Tron*, and its 2010 counterpart, *Tron: Legacy*. It is related to other parts of the Tron franchise, such as the video game *Tron: Evolution* and the comic book series *Tron: Betrayal*. It is the only TV series that is part of the franchise, as a live-action series had been in development but was later cancelled. This 19-episode series had Charlie Bean as the showrunner and Robert Valley as the co-director. Although I wasn't sure what to think about this series at first, its combination of action, sci-fi, cyberpunk, drama, and superhero elements drew me in like no other show. As a warning, this recommendation discusses some spoilers for *Tron: Uprising*.





*Paige and the programs of Argon City*

*Tron: Uprising* centers around Beck (voiced by Elijah Wood), a young program in a computer world known as the Grid. He becomes the leader of a revolution against Clu (voiced by Fred Tatasciore), a dictator who rules over the Grid with an iron fist. As the story goes, Clu turned against the Grid's creator, Kevin Flynn, and the Grid's original protector, Tron (voiced by Bruce Boxleitner). Tron was reportedly killed by Clu, but somehow survived and vowed to train Beck, believing he could be the next person to defend the Grid.

Clu's loyal enforcer is the brutal General Tesler (voiced by Lance Henriksen). He is assisted by his field commander, Paige (voiced by Emmanuelle Chriqui), and Tesler's sadistic lieutenant, Pavel (voiced by Paul Reubens). Beck works at a garage and repair shop in Argon City run by Able alongside his friends Mara (voiced by Mandy Moore), Zed (voiced by Nate Corddry), and Link (voiced by David Arquette).

The series also features characters such as Bartik (voiced by Donald Faison) and Hopper (voiced by Paul Scheer) who are part of Paige's task force, which is trying to find Beck, known as "Renegade" or "Tron" by the public. In addition, there's a criminal gang member named Perl (voiced by Kate Mara), a scientific program named Keller (voiced by Marcia Gay Harden)

employed to brainwash those in Argon City into obeying the dictates of Clu, and a technician named Gorn (voiced by Kathryn Hunter) who specializes in modifying and erasing memories.

In some ways, *Tron: Uprising* begins on a similar note to [Star Wars Resistance](#), as the protagonist of that series, Kazuda "Kaz" Xiono, works as a mechanic on the refueling station known as the *Colossus*, along with other mechanics. While the two series are nothing like each other, having different tones, themes, characters, and stories, there is some more overlap in terms of the voice talent. Wood and Faison voiced characters in the aforementioned series while Tatasciore and Reubens had roles in other *Star Wars* series.

*Tron: Uprising* has some diversity in its cast, as Chriqui is of Moroccan-Jewish descent, while VelJohnson, Faison, and Reddick are Black men. Although the show's cast is mostly composed of White people, Parminder Kaur Nagra, who is of Indian descent, guest stars in one episode, as does Jamie Hector, a Black man, in another episode. Even so, the series shines in other areas.

For one, the voice actors are well-established and carry the story, and characters. Apart from those who had roles in the *Star Wars* series, I was aware of Moore from *Tangled: The Series*, VelJohnson from *3Below*, Scheer from [Star Trek: Lower Decks](#), Mara from *House of Cards*, and Wilde from her many films. I was not familiar with the other voice actors before watching this series, so they were new to me. The voice of Boxleitner, especially, was very defined and I think one of the best voice acting performances of the whole series.

The music of *Tron: Uprising* is composed by Joseph Trapanese. It is fitting for a series that often deals with dark themes, even if it is said to be for "children." This includes characters being stabbed and disintegrating into nothing. In my opinion, this series is clearly not for children, even though it is within Wikipedia categories for children's animated series and was rated TV-Y7 when it aired on Disney XD. It is a mature series.

This reminds me of how *Samurai Jack* was given the TV-Y7 rating, with a subheading for fantasy violence, meaning it should be suitable for those over age seven. This is even though in the third episode, "Part III: The First Fight," the protagonist, Jack, is covered in black ink from the robots, which looks like blood.

The animation style of *Tron: Uprising* is one of the strong suits. Some described the series as a mix of 2-D animation and CGI. *Variety* [described](#) the series as borrowing from anime

style. Showrunner Charlie Bean [later said](#) that he wanted to create a "distinct style" which hadn't been seen anywhere else, and this series fulfills that idea.

Animation of characters and settings is very fluid, blending in a powerful way, especially in action sequences, like the one in the episode "Blackout." Even some of the scenes where light jets are chasing Beck, in his persona, make me think of the innumerable space battles in *Star Wars Rebels*. Animation of the bikes and the character designs were one of the most amazing parts of the show. The series looks and feels like something I haven't seen anywhere else before, with its impressive chase and fight scenes and amazing background art.

This makes it no surprise that the series was nominated for Annie Awards in animated production and storyboarding for specific episodes, while it won Annie Awards for character and production design. The show's art director Alberto Mieglo even won an Emmy Award for art direction in animation due to this series. The animation draws you in from the first episode and makes you want to keep watching. The show's [art work](#) was one of the many reasons it was positively received.



The story of *Tron: Uprising* is simple. It falls into the good/evil dichotomy, with Beck and Tron shown as "good" while Clu, Tesler, Paige, and Pavel as portrayed as "evil." Beck is pushed to act and refuses at first, and is guided forward by Tron, a magical helper/guide, part of the first three stages of the "hero's journey." However, Beck does not go on a trek of any kind.



Instead, the series begins a little like the first episode of *Samurai Jack* where Jack learns to become a warrior.

Boxleitner [described](#) the series as akin to *The Mask of Zorro* where he is "looking for a young one to train and...[they] have that master-student relationship." Beck goes through training, which is, at times, brutal. He even saves one of his enemies, Paige, from being obliterated in one episode, and from being sucked into a sinking island in another.

On the other hand, he is drawn to devices that give him more power, like a special disk which he acquires in the episode "Price of Power," which makes him more aggressive. He tries to keep it to save his friends, even though Tron tells him that it is dangerous. This focus reminds me a bit of Steven in *Steven Universe* or Elena on *Elena of Avalor* whose powers are tied to their emotions.

His boss at the garage, Able (voiced by Reginald VelJohnson) is akin to Yeager in *Star Wars Resistance*, as he discovers Beck's life as the figure of resistance after thinking Beck is a slacker at first. He doesn't directly support Beck but covers for him when Beck is absent from work. Later he ends up being killed by Cyrus when a bomb gets reactivated and explodes.

Cyrus (voiced by Aaron Paul) was chosen by Tron as the first renegade and later described as his "mistake." He believes that the only way to save everyone is to destroy the grid, that there is no free will, and that everything is pre-determined. He uses Beck to activate an EMP but fails in this endeavor.

The character of Cyrus symbolizes the antithesis of Beck, in that he is willing to engage in violence and destruction to achieve his goals. These actions are not targeted, but are rather meant to send a message. Although Tron later kills him, he becomes weaker and is on the edge of death. Luckily, Tron is healed in the final episode and barely escapes from being reprogrammed for evil.

Yeager in *Star Wars Resistance* covers for Kaz, but never meets his demise. Similarly, Kanan Jarrus in *Star Wars Rebels* takes on Ezra Bridger as his apprentice to be trained as a Jedi. For Beck, it is different. He has a double life, struggling to balance being a freedom fighter and a mechanic at a shop. Although Able, just like Yeager, soon knows of Beck's secret identity, he also has a history with Tron, his old friend. He first tries to convince Tron to not involve Beck, but then helps more directly.

*Tron: Uprising* includes the usual themes of romantic tension. Specifically, Zed is romantically attracted to Mara and becomes jealous of how she strongly supports Beck in his Renegade/Tron persona. This is made worse by Beck, in this persona, taking advantage of Zed, time and again, annoying him even more.

Mara also has a crush on the Renegade, something which Beck is unsure of how to handle. Even so, he still helps Mara, along with Zed, to free her and other programs from mind control. In a few episodes, Beck and Paige flirt with one another and go on several dates, even though they are on different sides of the conflict. This is short-lived. It ends abruptly with Pavel's scheme to get back at her. She later claims that she got "soft" and lost focus, so she can no longer be with him. It is an open question as to how much Beck liked Paige, as he may have seen her as more of an asset and possible revolutionary than a girlfriend.

On the other hand, Mara openly supports "Tron," even questioning official reports and declarations which describe him as a "terrorist." She fully embodies the idea that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter, something has been said in different forms [since the 1950s](#). Zed is also attracted to Perl, a program he meets at a bar, until she steals a classic cycle bike.

Throughout the series, Mara comes more into her own, first when she is the temporary leader of the garage, and then as the leader of a group of graffiti artists, including herself, Moog and Rasket, known as the Jolly Tricksters. Toward the end of the series, she leads those defending Tron after she realizes that the Renegade cannot be blamed for the death of Able.

*Tron: Uprising* clearly indicates to the viewers which groups should be seen positively and which ones negatively. The occupation of Argon city is shown as a brutal takeover. It is akin to the Galactic Empire in *Star Wars Rebels* dispossessing people from their homes and enslaving others or the First Order in *Star Wars Resistance* which destroys entire planetary systems in shows of force. There is a curfew in one episode with a message blaring it is for the "protection" of everyone, when it is only a way to control people.

The oppression of Clu and his minions is a menace that Beck and Tron are wholly dedicated to resisting, without question. This is noted by Tricia Helfer, the voice of the Grid at the beginning of each episode. Tesler is shown using his words and messaging to try and turn the people of Argon against the Renegade without using any of his loyal lieutenants while declaring that he rules the state.

This is evident in the episode "The Reward," where he offers anyone who gives him information a special reward, almost like a game show. It causes many people to be falsely accused of being the Renegade. At one point, Dyson (voiced by John Glover), a villain who appears in a few episodes, rightly comments about how badly Tesler and his lieutenants are ruling the city, but no one wants to listen to him.

Tesler is willing to use brutal force against anyone. He de-rezzes those who disagree with him, equivalent to killing them, with his bare hands. He often uses propaganda to make fellow programs support his brutality and turn on the Renegade. He is no mere villain. Rather he is cunning and deceitful, with messages that people may latch onto, believing he is speaking on their behalf when he is out for himself. Even so, he can be manipulated by faulty information.

People's hatred of the "other" is shown in *Tron: Uprising*. This is most acute in Tron's flashbacks to when he attempted to stop a peaceful demonstration against ISOs (Isomorphic Algorithms), standing between demonstrators and the ISOs. Sadly, a provocateur ends up throwing a disk and the crowd rushes the ISOs, killing them one by one, while Tron and his team are left overwhelmed.

Later, Flynn states that ISOs have just as much a right to be there as anyone. This is like those saying that immigrants belong in a where they set down their roots, no matter if it is their "home" country or not, as opposed to faulty arguments about undocumented immigrants.



One character in *Tron: Uprising* shows the allure of power and manipulation: Cutler (voiced by Lance Reddick). Originally an ally of the Renegade and Beck, he returns in the final episode. He has been repurposed and demands Tron's surrender. He wants perfection and the victory of Clu. Sadly, despite Beck's attempt to save him, he is too far gone, so Beck lets him fall to his death.

Just like [Arcane](#), which is part of the larger *League of Legends* franchise, watching the films and video games, or reading the comics of the franchise itself is not needed before watching *Tron: Uprising*. In fact, I had never watched anything related to the franchise, apart from a [2011 Futurama episode](#) which has a light cycle chase scene referencing the 1982 film and its 2010 sequel.

Sadly, like all too many animated series, there are no LGBTQ characters in *Tron: Uprising*. The closest we have is when Keller holds a device against her neck and it changes her form into a man, to disguise her real identity. However, this doesn't prevent fans from making their own headcanons of specific characters and shipping them if they see fit.

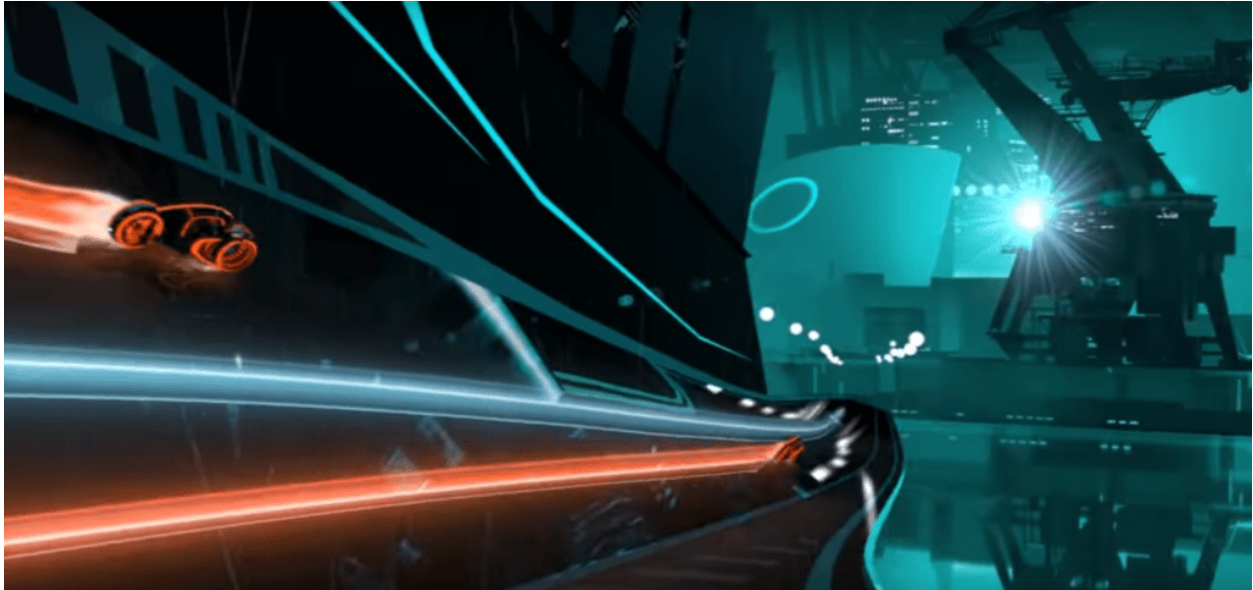
There are possible ships one could make, like between Paige and Beck in his "Tron" persona, since Paige is drawn to that persona, even willing to stop fighting it for short periods of time. However, someone could easily ship Paige with one of her female friends, or those shown in the episode "Isolated," like Quorra (voiced by Olivia Wilde).

Currently, there are [over 280 fanfics](#) for *Tron: Uprising* on AO3, often with themes of angst, friendship, fluff, hurt, or comfort. Some of the popular ships on the site are Beck and Tron, as friends, along with Beck/Paige, Tron/Yori, Mara/Zed, Pavel/Zed, Sam Flynn/Quorra, and Beck/Cutler romantically. Of these, the latter appears to be the only popular ship between male characters. Some have also written fics portraying Paige as asexual, and a few writers have shipped her with Quorra, and Radia from *Tron: Betrayal* and *Tron: Evolution*, but [many more have shipped her](#) with male characters, like Tesler, Pavel, and Beck, instead.

*Tron: Uprising* has a certain magnetism to it, from its voice actors, the music, animation, and overall feel. It is something you want to keep watching so that you can learn the whole story.

Beck has many near-death experiences and seeing people be de-rezzed in front of him means he is experiencing some level of trauma. The events of the series weigh heavily on his friends and even on Paige, especially after Pavel conspires to label her as a "traitor" with manufactured evidence even as she remains a loyal footsoldier and enforcer of Clu.

The latter scheme hints at how easy it is to spin information to take out those you don't like, especially in an autocratic force like those occupying the grid, and that anyone can be a target. It is a very chilling idea, and it has relevance to our current technological world.



*Beck chased by enemy cycles in the first episode. This scene especially reminded me a lot of those years of playing Armagetron at camp.*

To be perfectly honest, one of the original draws of *Tron: Uprising* was that it reminded me of a game I once played as a camp counselor with campers at a technology camp: Armagetron Advanced or "Tron" for short. It is a multiplayer computer game that tries to, according to the [game's official website](#), "emulate and expand on the light cycle sequence from the movie Tron," and is said to be an arcade game of sorts "slung into the 21st century." That is part of the reason I liked this series so much, as there are a lot of scenes with light cycles.

When watching this series, I kept thinking back to all the fun times I had when I played the game, especially when I cackled when cutting off other players and causing their light cycles to crash into my trails, leading them to explode. Those memories were part of the drive that pushed me to continue the series. So, you could say that for me, this series was a bit of a throwback. I don't mean that in a negative way, but rather that I like to make personal connections with what I'm watching.

The likelihood of *Tron: Uprising* of having another season is nil. It is less likely than a possible new season of *Sym-Bionic Titan* that Gennedy Tartokovsky has [floated in the past](#). This

is unfortunate because the show has the potential to be a longer series featuring many parts and chapters, just as series like [Disenchantment](#) has done. Even so, some fans have circulated [a petition](#) calling for *Tron: Uprising* to continue.

If there was a second season, they could expand upon the uprising in Argon City, the seizure of Able's garage by Pavel, and the huge fleet led by Clu on its way to Argon, obviously to crush any resistance. Perhaps there could even be a plotline where Pavel's involvement in framing Paige results in him being de-rezzed.

*Tron: Uprising* had a rocky airing schedule. It was effectively cancelled by Disney, which never renewed it for a second season, even after Kitsis said that [the series needed more viewers](#). Just like *Sym-Bionic Titan*, the series [was briefly](#) on Netflix from 2013 to 2014, and only recently, in 2019, appeared on Disney+. When the series aired, on Disney XD, from May 18, 2012, to January 28, 2013, it received generally positive reviews.

The series might have felt a little familiar to me because Bill Wolkoff, a writer for many episodes, was most recently a showrunner for Rad Sechrist's *Kipo and the Age of Wonderbeasts*. He also wrote a few *Star Wars Rebels* episodes. Additionally, André Bormanis, who wrote a few episodes of *Tron: Uprising*, is well-known for working on *Star Trek* series, even serving as a science consultant for various shows, so that undoubtedly rubbed off, in some way or another, into this series.

Some of the scenes in *Tron: Uprising* echo those in other shows, like General Hux addressing stormtroopers as they destroy planets in *Star Wars Resistance*, complete with slogans like "perfection is freedom." To discredit Beck in his Renegade persona, they even use one of his own friends, Zed, against him.

This tactic is not successful as Mara convinces him that it is wrong. Unlike the aforementioned series, there is a continual power struggle between Paige and Pavel, who are trying to impress Tesler with their plans to take down the Renegade. Pavel, in one episode, even creates a program to falsely accuse someone of being the Renegade to cement his power.

Paige is a fascinating and complex character, whose backstory we see most directly in the episode "Isolated." We learn how she joined the forces of Tesler after previously being a musician and medic, feeling that the ISOs somehow "betrayed" her. The horrifying reality is that Tesler set the whole thing up so that she would think this way and join him.

She continually struggles to impress Tesler and cement her place, tracking down the Renegade whenever she can, with whatever forces are at her disposal, even forming a task force. She is so dedicated to Tesler that she rejects a plea by Pavel to form a secret alliance against Tesler. Almost like how the *Colossus* barely escapes the First Order time and again in *Star Wars Resistance*, the Renegade manages to escape repeatedly, even when putting himself into harm's way.

It is interesting how Beck takes charge to such an extent that Tron listens to him. It becomes a case of the "master" listening to the "apprentice," rather than the other way around. In fact, Tron is only being held together by a healing chamber and he is easing Beck into the role of being a hero.

With *Tron: Uprising* currently at the end of its series order, now is the time to watch it on Disney+, Amazon Prime, or elsewhere. It's a great choice to binge over a weekend or a week!

© 2022-2023 Burkely Hermann. All rights reserved.



## Chapter 4: Why "The Ghost and Molly McGee" Is A Fun Animated Series!



*Molly and Scratch, the show's two protagonists*

*The Ghost and Molly McGee* tells the story of a Thai American tween who moves with her family to a new town and meets a ghost whom she befriends while adapting to her new school and having adventures along the way.

*The Ghost and Molly McGee* is a supernatural comedy, musical, and buddy comedy series by long-time Disney creators Bill Motz and Bob Roth, that is centered around the eponymous protagonist, Molly McGee. As a warning, this recommendation discusses some spoilers for the first 15 episodes of *The Ghost and Molly McGee*.





*The Ghost and Molly McGee* has a relatively simple storyline. Molly McGee, a half-Thai, half-Irish tween voiced by Ashly Burch, befriends a ghost named Scratch (voiced by [Dana Snyder](#)) who accidentally curses himself to be with her. She is joined by her father, Pete McGee (voiced by Jordan Klepper), her mother Sharon McGee (voiced by [Sumalee Montano](#)), and her no-good brother, Darryl (voiced by Michaela Dietz).

The show also features Molly's grandmother, Grandma Nin (also voiced by Montano), Molly's first friend in Brighton, Libby Stein-Torres (voiced by Lara Jill Miller), who is Latine and Jewish, her arch-nemesis / frenemy, Andrea Davenport (voiced by Jules Medcraft), her geeky friend Sheela (voiced by Aparna Nancherla), and her sweet and pink-haired friend, Kat (voiced by Eden Riegel).

Additional characters include Libby's mother, Ms. Stein-Torres (voiced by Pamela Adlon), who runs a [local bookshop](#), the town's mayor (voice by Patton Oswalt), the principal of Brighton Middle School, Principal O'Connor (voiced by Eugene Byrd), and the news reporter in Brighton, Joanie Pataky (voiced by Grey Griffin), and the twin uncle of Molly, Billy (voiced by John DiMaggio).

The opening song of the series is performed by Burch and Snyder. Allie Felder, Mike Kramer, Bill Motz, and Bob Roth wrote the song. The theme is relatively upbeat, pulling you into the series. It makes you want to watch each episode.

The same can be said for Molly herself, who has exuberance and dedication, even if it can be a bit much at times. This causes her to become too attached to a goat, freeze in the blizzard when no one else wants to go outside, and attempt to unite two long-lost lovers, to give a few examples.



*The Ghost and Molly McGee* is part of a raft of animated series recently produced by Disney which features diverse characters and themes. Such content includes *Mira*, *Royal Detective*, a children's animated series set in late 19th century India and comprised of an entirely South Asian cast, *The Owl House* which has an Afro-Latine and bisexual protagonist, and *Amphibia* with a Thai American main character, a Chinese American protagonist, and is created by a Thai animator. There's also [The Proud Family revival](#), *The Proud Family: Louder and Prouder*, which is [only airing](#) on the Disney+ streaming service, not on broadcast television, possibly setting a precedent for future Disney series.

Molly is the star of *The Ghost and Molly McGee* and is the opposite of her ghost friend, Scratch. He wants to make people miserable and make the world worse, while she wants to make the world better and spread joy. Even so, their unexpected, and unlikely, friendship, blossoms

through the series, guiding them through the worlds they inhabit. [At times](#), their friendship is even at stake.

The series [has been praised](#) for having characters who have left their "mortal coil," in the case of Scratch and for its [star-studded cast](#) of guest stars, some of whom are people of color. This list of guest stars includes Greta Gerwig, Eden Riegel, Kelsey Grammer, Yuri Lowenthal, Alanna Ubach, Yvette Nicole Brown, Marieve Herington, D'Arcy Carden, Grey Griffin, and Danny Trejo. Additionally, Chandler Kinney, Chris Diamantopoulos, Jessica Keenan Wynn, and Montano voice characters who make guest appearances.

All in all, the show is undoubtedly "[frightfully fun](#)," while integrating Thai culture [into storylines](#), helping to educate viewers about Thai culture. *Mira, Royal Detective* does something similar with Indian culture, as does *Amphibia* when it comes to Anne's Thai parentage and ancestry. The series also has many hilarious moments, either through the dialogue or situations the characters find themselves in.



*Molly hugs her "best friend" Scratch*

Those who voice the characters for *The Ghost and Molly McGee* are a talented bunch. Some have appeared in indie series like [Ollie & Scoops](#), while others have voiced characters in

series ranging from *OK K.O.! Let's Be Heroes* to *Steven Universe*, [Cleopatra in Space](#) to *Adventure Time*, and *The Loud House* to *Glitch Techs*, to name a few.

The show's crew is similarly talented. For instance, episode writers Samantha "Sam" King, Sammie Crawley, Cynthia Furey, Madison Bateman, Charley Feldman, and Maiya Williams wrote for *The Loud House*, *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*, *DC Super Hero Girls*, *Clifford the Big Red Dog*, *The Owl House*, and *Futurama* respectfully. Other writers, like Paul Chang and Peter Limm, are new. Additional writers, such as Peri Segal, and Katie Greenway, have only written for live action shows before this series.

Such talent and inventiveness in *The Ghost and Molly McGee* make it no surprise that the series has already been renewed for a second season. Unlike [The Owl House](#) which [was cancelled](#) for not "fitting" Disney's brand, *The Ghost and Molly McGee* falls under the branding linked to the company's claim it is the "world's greatest storytelling company" [as it declared](#) in a recent press release.

I have to mention the LGBTQ+ representation in the series. In September 2021, Roth [indicated](#) the show will address LGBTQ+ issues. He later [confirmed](#) this on Twitter the following month and also [argued](#) that people were reading too much into the interactions between Molly and her friend Libby, assuming that such interactions were romantic.

In October 2021, the series introduced a history teacher, Ms. Roop, voiced by Jane Lynch, a lesbian actress. In one episode, "Mazel Tov, Libby!", she slow-dances with a woman. In a later episode, "No Good Deed", she is noted as a lesbian and [it is shared](#) that she danced with her wife, Pam. Going by what the creatives have shared, there will undoubtedly be more LGBTQ characters as the series continues through its first season and into its second.

Beyond this is the fact that [Burch](#), who voiced Molly, has voiced various LGBTQ+ characters in the past. This includes the Rutil Twins in *Steven Universe*, Enid in *OK K.O.! Let's Be Heroes*, [Ash Graven in Final Space](#), Lainey in *The Loud House*, and many others.

Burch [acknowledged this](#). She told an interviewer for *Gayming* magazine that she doesn't know if it is a coincidence or is cast with it in mind, but the "majority of the characters" she voices "are LGBTQIA+."

Valerie Anne, a reviewer for *Autostraddle*, an online queer feminist magazine, [stated](#) that she didn't know if Burch is queer in real life, but has played enough queer characters that she

considered Burch "queer until she says otherwise". Anne added that Burch is "obviously an ally" since she continues to play queer characters, who she often champions.

All in all, *The Ghost and Molly McGee* is a must-see, especially for those interested in diverse stories and watching two episodes in a row for the length of one 22-minute-long episode.

The series is currently airing on the Disney Channel and streaming on Disney+.

© 2022-2023 Burkely Hermann. All rights reserved.



## Chapter 5: "Amphibia" Emphasizes Chosen Families and Self-Acceptance



What if a Thai American girl wakes up and finds herself in a world filled with talking frogs? *Amphibia* answers that question. Anne meets new friends, enemies, and tries to figure out her purpose in this strange world.

*Amphibia* is an animated adventure-fantasy-comedy series by Matt Braly, an animator of Thai descent. He is also known for directing episodes of *Gravity Falls* and *Big City Greens*. As a warning, this recommendation discusses spoilers for all three seasons of *Amphibia*.



*Amphibia* centers around a 13-year-old Thai-American girl, Anne Boonchuy ([Brenda Song](#)), who is transported by a music box to another world with her two best friends, Sasha Waybright (Anna Akana) and Marcy Wu (Haley Tju). In this wild land, filled with marshes and tropical environments, she meets talking frogs and other creatures, including a family of frogs named the Plantars.

This family is headed by the overbearing and traditional grandfather, Hop Pop (Bill Farmer). He has two kids-of-sorts: an excitable frog named Sprig (Justin Felbinger) and a spunky pollywog named Polly (Amanda Leighton). All of them live on a farm of their own in the close-knit town of Wartwood. As Anne bonds with the Plantars, she learns what friendship and being heroic means.

This all-ages animated series is filled with diversity, especially from its characters and voice actors. The latter are of Chinese, Indonesian, Pakistani, Japanese, and Thai descent. The show complements this with wonderful animation, music, and background art.

Unsurprisingly, the series has been nominated for four Annie Awards, one Daytime Emmy, and [a GLAAD Media Award](#) since it began airing in 2019. It includes some voice actors I'm familiar with, like Tress MacNeille and John DiMaggio, who voice characters [in \*Disenchantment\*](#), as well as well-known gay actor George Takei.



*From left to right: Sasha, Marcy, and Anne with "cool anime" powers in the final episode of Amphibia, floating the air like anime heroes or Kid Cosmic protagonists*

*Amphibia* is more than a series centered on a girl who is adopted by a family of talking frogs. While there is the classic conflict of good vs. evil, there is also a focus on family separation, self-acceptance, and trauma. As [I wrote previously](#), all of the main protagonists have trauma on same level or another, as the friendship between all three of them faces hardships and strains.

This is all mixed together with fantasy and sci-fi elements, and even occasionally situational comedy acts. These complex characters are written in such a way that you become invested and concerned about them, even after ending the series. The series also has plotlines focused on [human](#) and animal experimentation, and robots.

This series is part of a recent set of diverse Disney animated series. Others include [The Ghost and Molly McGee](#), a supernatural fantasy, and will-be-ending horror comedy and fantasy [The Owl House](#). Upcoming series such as *Iwaju*, *Moana: The Series*, *Tiana*, *Cookies & Milk*, *Hailey's On It!*, and Marvel's [Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur](#) portend a continuation of this focus.

In the case of *Amphibia*, Braly based the series on [his trips to Bangkok, Thailand](#) where he thought he was an outsider. He also was [inspired](#) by video games like *The Legend of Zelda*



and *Chrono Trigger*. In previous interviews he said he wanted to make the main character a Thai-American because there were [few Thai protagonists](#) in TV series or films that he watched as a kid. As a result, he has said he was influenced by the *Mortal Kombat* and *Sonic the Hedgehog* franchises.

In a December 2021 interview, Braly noted the themes of immigration, alienation, and xenophobia drawn from his own experiences. All these themes are deeply integrated into the series. Some of this is heavily informed, [according to Braly](#), by the 1990s series, *Pepper Ann*. Braly also noted that frogs were chosen for the series because they are metaphor for change and their connection to Thai culture.



Lady Olivia (right) looks at General Yunan (left) lovingly and tells her she wouldn't mind "settling down" in Wartwood with Yunan.

*Amphibia* is rightly praised for illustrating issues like emotional manipulation, bullying, and delightful characters. The series could also be praised for broadening "ethnic-racial representations" like [Craig of the Creek](#) and *Elena of Avalor*. This is something that groups like the socially conservative family-oriented non-profit, Common Sense Media, would praise.

[A 2021 report](#) from the organization notes that when people of color are portrayed stereotypically, it causes harmful views to be promoted among White audiences. This is coupled

with underrepresentation of specific groups, such as Latine and Indigenous people, and misrepresentation of others.

Little mentioned is LGBTQ representation in *Amphibia*. Although it isn't as direct as other recent series, like *Dead End: Paranormal Park* or *The Owl House*, Braly stated that in the show's finale, [they left it open](#) as to whether someone thinks of Sasha, Marcy, and Anne romantically or not, as he loves shipping. He called it the "greatest expression of love for characters."

This gives queer fans who ship Marcanne (Marcy and Anne), Sasharcy (Sasha and Marcy), Sashanne (Sasha and Anne), or even all three in a relationship together some solace. This is the case even if this so-called "Calamity Trio" are only "gal pals" in the show's canon.

Even so, Sasha was hinted as bisexual in the show's final episode, and confirmed as such by Braly, as I [noted in an earlier post](#). Her voice actress, Akana, is bisexual herself. She voiced Daisy in [magical girl esque](#) *Magical Friendship Girl Squad: Origins* and *Magical Girl Friendship Squad*. In the case of Daisy, Akana argued that Daisy was bisexual. However, other crew members argued she was a lesbian, and possibly trans, leading to confusion among fans.

Coming back to *Amphibia*, Sasha joins other LGBTQ characters such as Frodrick Toadstool and Toadie who were [confirmed](#) as a gay couple by the show's creator. More significantly is Yunan (Zahra Fazal) and Lady Olivia (Michelle Dockery) as lesbian couple. There's also Ally and Jess who run an Internet video channel together. Their colors are based off the bisexual and pansexual flags.

It is also implied that Mr. X, voiced by RuPaul, is gay, and there are some other minor LGBTQ characters. Like Sasha, the sexual identities of these characters are never directly stated. Mr. X is an effeminate FBI agent assisted by a silent assistant named Jenny. After Anne and frog family escape to Amphibia, Anne's birth family convince Mr. X to hear them out and to be on the same side against Andrias. This results in the military and FBI assisting Anne and her friends in the final episode.

The relationship of Yunan and Olivia, [was embraced](#) by reviewers like Jade King, who calls herself "TheGamer's Queen of Gay Cartoons." Braly told King that the ship of these two characters was their favorite ship. He called it "very organic" and "awesome." Fans were jubilant about the news, and fully embraced it. It undoubtedly helped that Fazal [was inspired](#) by the protagonist of *Darkwing Duck* in voicing the character.

Considering that the [final episode](#) has a ten year time-skip, it makes the series ripe for [a possible spin-off or continuation](#) that happens in that time skip, with different protagonists than this series. While some are conflicted about a spin-off, the show could go a route a la *Steven Universe Future*, focusing on the aftermath of a victory, with Anne, Marcy, and Sasha having to pick up the pieces.

All three seasons of *Amphibia* are currently streaming on Disney+, YouTube TV, and Prime Video.

© 2022-2023 Burkely Hermann. All rights reserved.

## Chapter 6: "The Owl House" Showcases Diverse Stories and LGBTQ Representation



*Luz hugs King*

What if a girl stumbled into another world filled with witches, wizards, and magic? *The Owl House* answers that question, as Luz explores a new world with new friends, enemies, and learns more about herself along the way.

*The Owl House* is an animated fantasy series by Dana Terrace, a bisexual animator and writer. She is known for storyboarding episodes of *Gravity Falls* and the recent reboot of *DuckTales*. As a warning, this recommendation discusses spoilers for episodes of *The Owl House*.





*King, Eda, Luz, and Mr. Tibbles*

*The Owl House* centers around Luz Noceda (voiced by Sarah-Nicole Robles), a Dominican-American teenage girl who enters an alternate world. She arrives on a set of islands known as Boiling Isles. Luz soon befriends an older witch named Eda Clawthorne (voiced by Wendie Malick), also known as The Owl Lady.

She also meets a small demon named King (voiced by [Alex Hirsch](#)), and a witty door knocker of the Owl House, Hooty (voiced by Hirsch). Although Luz doesn't have innate magical abilities, she serves as a witches' apprentice to Eda, and lives at the Owl House.

To hone her magical skills, Luz goes to Hexside Academy, where each student has a magical track. She meets other classmates like Willow Park (voiced by Tati Gabrielle) and Gus Parker (voiced by Issac Ryan Brown). Willow and Gus are skilled in plant and illusion magic.

Luz becomes fast friends with them. As someone obsessed with human culture, Gus tries to learn what he can from her. Over the course of the first season, Luz slowly improves her relationship with the school's top student, Amity Blight (voiced by Mae Whitman).

The series features characters such as the school's principal, Hieronymus Bump (voiced by Bumper Robinson) and Eda's sister, Lilith Clawthorne (voiced by Cissy Jones). There's also the ruler of the Boiling Isles and series villain, Emperor Belos, a witch student named Boscha

(voiced by Eden Reigel), and Amity's siblings Emira "Em" and Edric "Ed" Blight (voiced by Erica Lindbeck and Ryan O'Flanagan). Kevin Michael Richardson, [Grey Griffin](#), Fred Tatasciore, Eric Bauza, Kari Wahlgren, Jorge Diaz, and Kimberly Brooks voice other characters.

*The Owl House* begins differently than any other series I've watched. Even though *Futurama* and *Samurai Jack* feature time travel. And *Final Space*, *Elliot from Earth*, *Otherside Picnic*, and [Helluva Boss](#) have dimensional travel. None of them are like this series. Although *The Owl House* has some similarities with *Steven Universe* and *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*, it is unique in and of itself.

Even so, there are season two episodes focusing on time travel and its implications. Viewers learn a frightening truth about Belos (voiced by Matthew Rhys). This scares his loyal servant, Hunter (voiced by Zeno Robinson) out of his mind. It makes Luz worried about her safety.

The series has received nominations for youth and family programming, character design, and voice-over work awards since its premiere. Most recently, it received a GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Kids and Family Programming, competing with *Amphibia* and other live-action productions. *The Owl House* previously received a nomination for the same award last year.



*The Owl House* has some cast diversity. Robles, who voices one of the series protagonists, is Afro-Latine. Elizabeth Grullon, who voiced Luz's mother, Camila, is of Dominican descent. She



described her character's relationship with Luz as a "[refreshing representation](#)" of a real Latine family. Robinson, Brown, and Brooks are Black actors. Gabrielle is Afro-Korean. Luz is significant as an animated character because [12% of Latine people](#), and 2% of the U.S. adult population, identify as Afro-Latine.

In 2021, series creator Dana Terrace [confirmed](#) that Luz is neurodivergent. Previously, some fans [argued](#) that she was ADHD-coded because of her hyperfixations and actions. The latter is still a possibility since she is neurodivergent.

T.J. Hill composed the first season's music. Brad Breek composed the second season's music. Hill also composed the theme music. It is fitting for this young adult fantasy series. The music often helps set the mood, connecting with the show's story. On Twitter, Hill [noted](#) that the show's score had "interesting and experimental sounds" which he enjoyed putting together. He [also composed](#) music for *Amphibia*.

The animation style of *The Owl House* is amazing. Terrace [has said](#) that Russian architecture and paintings of John Bauer, Remedios Varo, and Hieronymus Bosch inspired her. To make sure the show is visually effective, there [were over 100 people](#) as part of the crew, and 50 people on the pre-production crew alone, by December 2019.

Spencer Wan supervised the show's crew in the first season. Kofi Fiagome did the same in the second season. Ricky Cometa worked as the series art director. Demons in the show are not scary but represent actual people. Comeda [noted](#) that they designed Luz as a "nod to all...fellow nerds out there". Furthermore, the Boiling Isles [has a purple ocean](#) to distinguish it from Earth.



*Luz realizes she is in the Boiling Isles*

*The Owl House*, unlike some other series, has deep lore which pulls you into the series. This includes worldbuilding, like when Luz, Hooty, and King travel to Titan Trapper Island hoping to learn about King's past. What they find is something they don't expect, while King discovers his new powers and who he really is.

There are compelling stories, like those focused on the family backstories of Edith and Luz. Terrace has said that while much of the series lore is made up, the *Pokemon* franchise [strongly influenced](#) her. The show's main characters were even inspired by people in Terrace's life, with Luz even named after Terrace's roommate, Luz Batiste, [who is a story artist](#) on the show and is also Dominican-American.

The series, based on [Terrace's childhood experiences](#), has the twin themes of conformity and uniqueness. This interconnects with the horror elements of the series, which Disney executives were concerned about. The heartfelt and comedic elements [balance](#) out the more scary ones.

Even so, Terrace compromised between her ideas and the wishes of Disney executives. This resulted in the show's intended "darker tone" being minimized in the show's first season. In [the second season](#), the intended tone came to the fore and *The Owl House* truly became a young adult animation on par with *Dead End: Paranormal Park* and *The Legend of Korra*.

Critics from *Common Sense Media*, *Collider*, *The Mary Sue*, *The A.V. Club*, *CBR*, and *TheGamer* acclaimed the series during its first 19-episode season run. It received a second season renewal prior to the first season debut. However, while the series was renewed for a third and final season, only three 44-minute special episodes will air (despite the positive reception). [It is shorter](#) than the 10-20 episodes the production team had anticipated.

In a Reddit AMA, Terrace wrote that *The Owl House* got cut short because Disney executives claimed the show [did not fit into the "Disney brand."](#) She surmised that the show's serialized nature and older audience than other Disney productions, rather than the show's LGBTQ representation, was the reason. Terrace further revealed that the executives did not allow her to argue for a fourth season. She [believed the show could have a future](#) if different executives were in charge.

*The Owl House* is not dead and gone. Terrace has said she would like to continue it in the future either through a limited series or [comics](#). She encouraged fans to ask Disney for more content connected to the show. There was a series of shorts released on the official Disney Channel YouTube Channel entitled "Look Hooo's Talking" and comedic shorts entitled "Owl Pellets" released throughout 2020.



*Amity and Luz both blush after they agree to be girlfriends with one another.*

One of the most important aspects of the show is its LGBTQ+ representation. This is most outwardly manifested by Luz, who is bisexual. She is the first bisexual protagonist in a Disney series, although not the first bisexual character. Some read Li Shong (voiced by BD Wong) in *Mulan* and Nerissa in *W.I.T.C.H.* as bisexual. Jackie Lynn Thomas in *Star Vs. The Forces of Evil* is bisexual, as are Jess and Sasha Waybright [in \*Amphibia\*](#).

A major subplot in the series is the feelings Luz, and her original rival-of-sorts, Amity, have for one another. This begins with Amity blushing and acting bashfully toward Luz. This culminates with both [dancing together](#) to defeat a monster in "Enchanting Grom Fright".

Luz remains oblivious to the fact that Amity has a crush on her. She finally realizes this when Amity kisses Luz on the cheek in a Season 2 episode after going through dangerous trials to get her library job back.

Luz and Amity finally become a couple in the episode "Knock, Knock, Knockin' on Hooty's Door". Later episodes focused on the ups and downs of their relationship. They learn to not keep secrets from one another, even if those secrets are painful, and help each other as girlfriends.

This overjoyed fans who ship both characters as "Lumity", along with queer fans and other supporters of expanded representation. There are over 19,000 followers on the Lumity subreddit alone, as of writing this piece. In the episode titled 'Clouds on the Horizon', both characters [shared a romantic kiss together](#).



This open presentation of a queer romance contrasts with *Adventure Time*, *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*, *Gravity Falls*, and *The Legend of Korra*. In those series, the romantic feelings between characters were not canonized until the last episode.

While those series have their merits, having a relationship between two characters in the show proper, rather than at the end, is more impressive. Doing the latter cheapens the representation, in my opinion. Hopefully future series and films will avoid almost blink-and-you-miss-it moments, like the one in *The Mitchells vs. the Machines* (related to the protagonist's girlfriend).

Beyond Luz and Amity, there's Luz's guardian, Eda. She is revealed to be queer. She had a previous relationship with Raine Whispers (voiced by Avi Roque), leader of a coven fighting against the malevolent emperor, Belos. Raine has the distinction of being non-binary and transmasculine. They are, perhaps, the first Disney character to be non-binary.

The Collector, a being who collaborates with Belos on opening a portal to the human realm, was [recently hinted](#) at as being non-binary by the show's creator. Raine is the leader of anti-Belos group named Covens Against the Throne (CATS) which Eda, King, and Luz later join.



There's also Eda's older sister, Lilith. She [may](#) be aromantic and asexual, again breaking barriers. Also, like Bow's two dads, George and Lance, in *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*, Willow has two fathers, Gilbert and Harvey.

These aspects make some reactionary individuals, whether in halls of Congress or elsewhere in society, sneer. They declare that the series is "corrupting" their children or some other nonsense about how such media is "turning" kids queer.



*Luz worried about Hunter and being utterly terrified after coming out of the mind of Emperor Belos*

Putting aside the ramblings of reactionary people, it is easy to see why *The Owl House* is popular. It has diverse stories, focuses on friendship, and has the classic conflict between good and evil. It skews to an older, young adult crowd. This is clear through a changed tone from the show's first season to the second. It becomes dark at times, making it evident why [Disney wants the series to end](#).

The finale of Season 2 has the Collector and Belos work on a portal to the human realm, and on the Day of Unity, with a plan to wipe out wild magic forever. The draining spell succeeds. During it, Luz is saved by her friends and King talks to the Collector.



The episode ends with Luz, Amity, Hunter, Gus, and Willow fleeing through the portal door to the human realm, while King stays behind. This is more horrifying than when Anne and her frog family traveled to Earth [in \*Amphibia\*](#).

There is no knowing what happened to the Boiling Isles or King. While they all go to Luz's family home at the episode's end, their fate or whether they can return to the other world remains unknown. This will undoubtedly be the subject of the third and final season.

The series emphasizes the importance of one's chosen family and exploring your identity. It brings trauma to the forefront, as *Steven Universe Future* did with a focus on Steven's trauma. *The Owl House* has the potential to inspire others to follow in its footsteps.

It is not known how this young adult animation will influence any future [indie animations](#), webcomics, mainstream series, or other media. Some crew members may move forward and create their own series. After all, the former *Steven Universe* crew had a part in *OK K.O.: Let's Be Heroes*, *Summer Camp Island*, *Craig of the Creek*, *RWBY*, *Adventure Time: Distant Lands*, and *Amphibia*, some of which [are YA animations](#) and have queer content.

I highly recommend *The Owl House*. After watching the recent episodes, I came to realize why I love the series all over again.

The series is currently airing on the Disney Channel, streaming on Disney+, and is also available on Amazon Prime, and other platforms.

© 2022-2023 Burkely Hermann. All rights reserved.

## Chapter 7: The Great Jahy Will Not Be Defeated! Review



*Candace tells her mom that her brothers are making a title sequence in the show's opening song*

*Phineas and Ferb* tells the story of two stepbrothers who try to keep themselves occupied during their summer vacation, building elaborate inventions, while their sister tries to bust them and expose them to her mom, hoping to get recognition.

*Phineas and Ferb* is an animated musical, comedy, and science fantasy series created by Dan Povenmire and Jeff "Swampy" Marsh. They are a long-time animation writing duo who worked together on *The Simpsons* and *Rocko's Modern Life*. With the show debuting in August 2007, the series ran for four seasons and over 120 episodes. The series finale aired on June 15, 2015. As a warning, this recommendation discusses some spoilers for the four seasons of *Phineas and Ferb*.



*Candace happily talks on the phone while her brother, Phineas, pushes an elephant in the background, and his pet platypus, Perry, walks behind him in the show's opening sequence*

*Phineas and Ferb* centers around two stepbrothers, Phineas Flynn (Vincent Martella) and Ferb Fletcher (Thomas Brodie-Sangster). They live in the city of Danville and go on adventures during their summer vacation. Often their older teenage sister, Candace Flynn (Ashley Tisdale) attempts to bust them. She also tries to garner attention Jeremy Johnson (Mitchel Musso), a boy she likes.

If that isn't absurd enough, the animal companion of Phineas and Ferb is a platypus named Perry. While he acts like an animal who can't "do anything" when around his human family. He is a secret agent who is a member of O.W.C.A. (Organization Without a Cool Acronym). He faces off against the devious, yet bumbling, [Dr. Heinz Doofenshmitz](#) (Dan Povenmire). Doof has a rival named Rodney (Joe Orrantia) and is a member of the group of villains named L.O.V.E.M.U.F.F.I.N..

These storylines are interlaced with running gags, surreal and situational comedy. This involves word jokes, pop culture parodies, metahumor, wordplay, blank stares, and breaking the fourth wall.

In many ways, the series has many similarities to *Milo Murphy's Law*, [a sci-fi action adventure comedy](#) set in the same universe as *Phineas and Ferb*. This carries over in its tones

and characters. The second season of *Milo Murphy's Law* becomes a full-fledged crossover with some characters from *Phineas and Ferb*.

*Phineas and Ferb* was often promoted by Disney during its long run. There were live-action talk shows, two crossover episodes, and two television films. The first film, *Phineas and Ferb the Movie: Across the 2nd Dimension* aired in 2011.

The second *Phineas and Ferb the Movie: Candace Against the Universe* aired in 2020. The latter film is the most recent animation of the franchise's characters, apart from *Chibi Tiny Tales*. However, revival series [for The Proud Family](#), and for *Moana* and *The Princess and the Frog* film characters, may mean Disney might revive *Phineas and Ferb*.



*Many of the show's characters shown at the end of the Season 2 episode "Rollercoaster: The Musical!"*

The series is unique because it has a blended family. It is more common in pop culture now than when the series aired. Apart from Phineas, Ferb, and Candace, their mom, Linda Flynn-Fletcher (Caroline Rhea), and their dad Lawrence Fletcher (Richard O'Brien) are recurring characters. Occasionally Linda's parents, Clyde (Barry Bostwick) and Betty Jo (Rhea), and Lawrence's parents, Reginald (Malcolm McDowell) and Winifred (Jane Carr) appear.

This family focus is reflected in many songs and musical numbers throughout the series. There's even a fictional rock band named Love Händel. This is not unique. [Disney characters](#) in

*Elena of Avalor*, [Kim Possible](#), *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*, and *The Ghost and Molly McGee* sing about how families are wholesome and without fault.

*Kim Possible*, a Disney series, has similarities, dialogue that caters to adult viewers, and visual jokes. However, *Phineas and Ferb* is different. It lacks racial diversity among the cast. There are many White characters, such as a bully named Buford van Stomm (Bobby Gaylor), Carl the Intern (Tyler Alexander Mann), the hippyish friend of Candace, Jenny Brown (Stoner), and Doofenshirtz's ex-wife, Charlene (Allison Janey).

Characters who are people of color are the minority. They include two characters of Jewish Mexican descent: Isabella Garcia-Shapiro ([Alyson Stoner](#)), and Vivian Garcia-Shapiro (Eileen Galindo). Also, Baljeet Tjinder (Maulik Pancholy) is of Indian descent and Stacy Hirano (Kelly Hu) and is of Japanese descent.

Some fans of the show from South Asia, and Baljeet, criticized the series for problematic, and stereotypical character traits. In [an interview in May 2021](#), Dan Povenmire asked people to not use the character's name as an insult. He said that these criticisms of Baljeet, and the show, were valid. Povenmire stated that during the show, they leaned into cultural differences of Baljeet, and characters from other cultures, which "may have not aged well". He also argued that Baljeet became a "more well-rounded character" through the course of the show.

At the same time, there are many non-human characters. Apart from Perry, there's Isabella's pet chihuahua, Pinky, and many O.W.C.A agents. Both of which have voice effects by Dee Bradley Baker. There's also a robot created by Doofenshmirtz, Norm (John Viener). Pinky, like Perry, faces a villain, Prof. Esmeralda Poofenplotz (Amanda Plummer). She has a boss named Admiral Wanda Acronym (Jane Leeves).





*Candace and Vanessa talk in the end of the episode "Night of the Living Pharmacists", the last time they appear together in the series proper*

In April 2021, Dan Povenmire, co-creator of *Milo Murphy's Law* and *Phineas and Ferb*, announced in [a Tik Tok](#) comment in that Perry the Platypus was asexual. This led to [discourse](#) on Twitter on the topic. Some praised him as a “king” and an “icon”, made the show more interesting to watch, and a win for asexuals. Others said that making the only animal character in the series is not something you get “brownie points” for and bemoaned the lack of asexual representation.

That representation after-the-fact was better than gay vibes or subtext that fans can take from the series. Just as various fans support the slash ship between [Cavendish and Dakota](#) in *Milo Murphy's Law*, Dakavendish, according to the Shipping Wiki [fandom listing](#), some fans of *Phineas and Ferb* ship Buford and Baljeet (Bujeet), the two Doofenshmirtz (Doofcest), Ferb and Baljeet (Ferbjeet), Phineas and Dipper (Phindip), Candace and Stacy (Candacy), or Phineas, Ferb, and Isabella (Phinerbella).

However, one ship stands out: the one between Candace and Vanessa Doofenshmirtz (Olivia Olson). Called "Candessa" by fans, it has a small following on social media platforms and even has [a subreddit](#) dedicated to it. Unfortunately, the show's canon somewhat invalidates the ship as it shows Vanessa and Ferb together in a future episode, making Ferbnessa canon. The show's writing and scenes make the Phinabella ship between Phineas and Isabella, and Canderemy ship



between Candace and Jeremy canon. Even so, there is no heterosexual explanation for how Candace and Vanessa [act](#) around one another.

On the other hand, as Alex Henderson pointed out in his review criticizing heteronormivity [in](#) *Spy x Family*, a story can "have queer themes even if it doesn't have queer representation" and have queer readings even if there isn't any direct acknowledgement of "any queer issues within its narrative or any of its narrative framings." This is the case for *Phineas and Ferb*, with heteronormivity and gender norms communicated through the dress, clothing colors, mannerisms, and actions of characters. For one, Marsh [has said](#) that there are LGBTQ characters in the series, but did not give any names.

Furthermore, Swampy hoped that the song "Rebels Let's Go" [would be a "LGBT anthem"](#), while the voice actor of Phineas, Vincent Martella, said [that neither](#) Phineas, nor Ferb, are TERFs. Additionally, at the beginning of the episode "Act Your Age", Povenmire and Swampy said that Perry would not have a girlfriend, hinting at possible asexuality.

Some of the voice actors are part of the LGBTQ community. Stoner came out in March 2016, [saying](#) she was "attracted to men, women, and people who identify in other ways". She [later said](#) that she wanted to remain fluid at how she described her sexual orientation. Stoner voiced a lesbian character in *The Loud House* named Sam Sharp. In addition, Baljeet's voice actor, Pancholy, [came out](#) as gay in 2013.

Queer fans of *Phineas and Ferb* have headcanoned Doofenshmirtz, [Candace](#), and Vanessa as bisexual, Roger Doofenshmirtz (Doof's brother) as gay, Ferb and Phineas as non-binary, and Stacey as trans. Others found canon support for Bujeet. This makes sense, as does seeming [acknowledgement](#) that Perry is trans male, even if headcanons don't make sense. After all, Martella came out [strongly in support](#) of the LGBTQ community, to give one example.

Some fans may headcanon Candace as trans since she has [a deep voice](#) when she is near parsnips. She also sings about changing her name to "Larry" in the song "[Come Home Perry](#)".



The show has been very influential. Olson's voice role in the series is [one of the reasons](#) that Pendleton Ward, the *Adventure Time* creator, had her voice Marceline in *Adventure Time*. In fact, I'm almost certain I learned about *Phineas and Ferb*, when Pamela Adlon, who voiced a character in the aforementioned series, [sang the theme song](#) of the series. She sang it along with other characters of *Better Things*.

*Phineas and Ferb* has similarities to animated series about super spies and covert organizations. While *Inside Job* had a hilarious episode which parodied spy thrillers, the French and Canadian action comedy series, *Totally Spies!* had the most similarities. In that series, Alexandra "Alex", Clover, and "Sam" Samantha are teenagers who fight evildoers on the side. They work for the World Organization of Human Protection (WOHP). Their boss, Jerry, is like Major Monogram (Jeff "Swampy" Marsh) in *Phineas and Ferb*.

However, since it took [15 years](#) before Disney accepted the series, and [it aired on Disney](#), it is unlikely that *Totally Spies!* influenced *Phineas and Ferb*. Additionally, some have called Doof the [most "human" villain](#) on TV. This makes him different from villains or malcontents within *Totally Spies!* which will return for another season next year.

The series also featured many well-known voices. For example, Ming-Na Wen, Corey Burton, Cloris Leachman, Meera Syal, and Kari Wahlgren voice characters in the series. There

are also a plethora of guest stars such as Phil LaMarr, Keith Ferguson, Kevin Michael Richardson, John DiMaggio, George Takei, and Stan Lee.

Povenmire and Swampy have used the series to springboard into their own projects. Povenmire is leading the soon-to-premiere action-comedy-superhero series, *Hamster & Gretel*. In [an interview](#) with him, and his daughter, Meli, who is voicing the show's protagonist, Gretel, he said he has ADHD. It [was implied](#) that Gretel has ADHD as well. The series will also feature Stoner as Lauren / The Destructress.

Swampy is an executive producer and director of [S.A.L.E.M.: The Secret Archive of Legends, Enchantments, and Monsters](#), an indie animated series by Samantha "Sam" Sawyer about a non-binary cryptid named Salem. He is [a founder](#) of the company Surfer Jack Productions.

It remains to be seen if Povenmire and Swampy will work together in a future series. They seem to be going off in their own directions, rather than collaborating as they did on *Phineas and Ferb* and *Milo Murphy's Law*.

Despite the lack of diversity in cast and lack of openly LGBTQ characters in *Phineas and Ferb*, something which recent Disney series like *The Ghost and Molly McGee*, *Amphibia*, and *The Owl House*, it still stands out as a strong series. I would unequivocally recommend the series.

Currently, *Phineas and Ferb* is streaming on Disney+ and Prime Video, with the first season available for free [on YouTube](#).

© 2022-2023 Burkely Hermann. All rights reserved.

## Chapter 8: "Hamster & Gretel": A Series With Promise



*Hamster & Gretel* tells the story of 16-year-old boy, Kevin, who helps his sister, Gretel, when she and her pet hamster get superpowers. It is an animated action, comedy, and superhero series created by Dan Povenmire. He is well-known for being a co-creator of *Phineas and Ferb*, and *Milo Murphy's Law*, with Jeff "Swampy" Marsh, often his writing partner. The series [debuted](#) on August 12.

*Hamster & Gretel* has a simple storyline. An elementary school kid named Gretel (Meli Povenmire) is granted the power to fly and superstrength. She fights alongside her hamster (Beck Bennett). Her older teenage brother, Kevin (Michael Camino), tries to guide Gretel and Hamster. He helps them recognize what it means to defeat evil and remain superheroes.

The series is set in the same universe as [Milo Murphy's Law](#) and [Phineas and Ferb](#). Although it has [been stated](#) that no official crossover will happen, it is not known which characters will reappear in *Hamster & Gretel*.

Diversity is a big part of *Hamster & Gretel*. Gretel and Kevin are Venezuelan lead characters. Their mother, Carolina Grant-Gomez (Carolina Ravessa) is Venezuelan. The fact that the head writer, Joanna Hausmann, [is Venezuelan](#), as is Povenmire's wife, according to [a podcast](#), inspired these characters.

Additionally, the series is based on a [dynamic](#) between Povenmire and his younger sister. It is also [inspired](#) by Povenmire's family. The series will [focus](#) on Kevin and Gretel's sibling relationship, according to show director Amber Tornquist Hollinger.

*Hamster & Gretel* includes many former cast and crew who worked on Povenmire's previous projects. Hiromi "Romi" Dames, who voices Hiromi, a geeky comic book shop employee that Kevin has a crush on, voiced Charlene & Sharon Burlee in *Milo Murphy's Law*. Phil LaMarr voiced Marcus Underwood in the same show, while Alyson Stoner voiced Lydia.

Danny Jacob, a composer, performer, and songwriter for *Phineas and Ferb*, is the series composer and song producer. Like *Milo Murphy's Law*, Povenmire is involved with the show's music. However, he is more involved in the songwriting for this series.

As for Stoner, her voice acting as Isabella Garcia-Shapiro in *Phineas and Ferb* is well-known. In this series, LaMarr voices a supervillain, Professor Exclamation. Stoner voices Lauren/The Destructress. The latter is part of a fraternal evil duo with Lyle/FistPuncher (Brock Powell).



*Hamster & Gretel* has promise as a new series due to its animation and voice acting. Even the simple storylines have the potential to lead to something more. It is easily digestible and doesn't take itself seriously. This quality is not only present in *Phineas and Ferb* and *Milo Murphy's Law*, but [Kim Possible](#), a classic 2000s Disney series.



Reportedly, *Hamster & Gretel* has action sequences [with better quality](#) than the two aforementioned series co-created by Povenmire. The series garnered voice actors like Joey King, who voices Fred, a tech-savvy cousin of Kevin. Also, actor and comedian Matt Jones voices Dave, the father of Kevin and Gretel.

Povenmire voices an unseen extraterrestrial entity. Internet personality Liza Koshy voices Veronica Hill, a no-nonsense news reporter. Priah Ferguson (best known from *Stranger Things*) has a breakout animation voice role as Bailey, a school friend of Gretel. Also, Povenmire's daughter, Meli, has her first big-time voice role as Gretel.

The show's voice actors are experienced. They voiced characters in *The Simpsons*, *American Dad!*, *Adventure Time*, *Amphibia*, and *Onyx Equinox*. Series such as *Victor and Valentino*, [The Ghost and Molly McGee](#), *The Legend of Korra*, *We Bare Bears*, *DC Super Hero Girls*, *Harley Quinn*, *Final Space*, *Craig of the Creek*, and *Disenchantment* also featured some of the show's voice talent.

Diverse representation of characters [of Venezuelan descent](#) and Black characters, like Bailey, is a key part of the series. However, it remains to be seen whether there will be LGBTQ+ characters or not.

Specifically, Camino described himself as straight [but said](#) he doesn't want his sexuality "in a box". Stoner, as I noted in [my review](#) of *Phineas and Ferb*, stated her attraction to men, women, and "people who identify in other ways". She also said she wanted to remain fluid in how she identified her sexual orientation. Hopefully, these qualities are portrayed in the characters they voice.

Furthermore, the series has emphasized the importance of being your true self and acceptance. Having LGBTQ+ characters would not be a stretch. It would easily fall within the series.



*Dave cries as Carolina introduces Dave's "lost" dad as a present*

Even so, the series has some downsides. For one, it is not a young adult series like *The Owl House*, which will be ending possibly this year with its final season, or the recently ended [Amphibia](#). Instead, kids and families are the target audience.

This is not unique. Currently airing Disney series like *Big City Greens*, *The Ghost and Molly McGee*, *Chibiverse*, *Chip 'n' Dale: Park Life*, and *Monsters at Work* appeal to this demographic. In addition, upcoming series such as *Cars on the Road*, *Firebuds*, *Cookies & Milk*, Marvel's [Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur](#), *Tiana*, *Iwaju*, *Moana: The Series*, *Hailey's On It!*, *Primos*, and [Kiff](#) are geared toward the same audience.

This contrasts with [Star Wars: The Bad Batch](#) and *What...If?*, which have more mature themes. Even *The Proud Family: Louder and Prouder* falls into this category. Such series are not, for the most part, the focus of Disney executives. Instead, they want to remain family-friendly despite [the growth](#) of the young adult animation genre with series like [Dead End: Paranormal Park](#), *The Owl House*, and *Infinity Train*.

In addition, the series has an issue with implied self-inserts. For one, Povenmire appears to loosely base Kevin on himself. Secondly, the father of Kevin and Gretel has a similar name to Povenmire. This complicates the series in various ways.

It is an open question as to how effective the series can be without Swampy, who is [reportedly voicing](#) characters later in the series, as a co-creator, and co-writer. *Milo Murphy's Law* and *Phineas and Ferb* were strong due to their combined talents.

In addition, I have concerns about the series' staying power considering the first episode is not strong. The [theme song](#) is not very good.

Furthermore, since Povenmire wrote and performed the song, it makes me worried that the series will be middling, rather than superb. Generally, I have a high tolerance for theme songs. But I dislike this one more than *Arcane*'s theme, sung by Imagine Dragons.



Kevin and Gretel [singing](#) about family togetherness

Despite this, the pop music of *Hamster & Gretel* is like *Milo Murphy's Law* and *Phineas and Ferb*. I was glad to see [a rap battle](#) at the end of "Neigh, It Ain't So!" It reminded me of the [much smoother rap battle](#) between Rinku and Muni [in D4DJ](#), voicing their grievances about each other in song. *Hamster & Gretel* may do something similar.

It is a distinct possibility that this series will do something akin to the [sick battle dance](#) in now non-canon 2005 *The Proud Family Movie*. It has a bizarre plot [almost pulled](#) from *Kim Possible* or *Totally Spies!* episode. Currently, such music battles generally only occur in anime series, but *Hamster & Gretel* could change that.

I liked the reference to the anime series within the show's universe about cheerleaders who masquerade as students in the daytime but have superpowers otherwise. It had a feel of *Totally Spies!* and was a clear parody of absurd anime out there.

Situational comedy is an [important part](#) of the series, similar to *Phineas and Ferb* and *Milo Murphy's Law*. It is coupled performances said to be "[inspired](#)", featuring actors like Thomas Sanders, who voiced a character in the TV film, *Candace Against the Universe*.

With other Disney series like *Elena of Avalor*, *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*, and *Mira Royal Detective* having elaborate musical numbers, it is likely that *Hamster & Gretel* will follow suit. There is also a [distinct possibility](#) that Disney will revive *Phineas and Ferb* as well.

Since ten episodes of *Hamster & Gretel* are on Disney+, the series appears to be one-third through the 30 episodes ordered for its first season. This means that there is a possibility that the series will become even better as the season continues.

Despite my criticisms, I tentatively recommend the series, and hope it improves in the future.

*Hamster & Gretel* can be watched on Disney+ or the Disney Channel.

Animation	★★★★★
Voice Acting	★★★★★
Music	★★★★★
3.5	
★★★★★	

© 2022-2023 Burkely Hermann. All rights reserved.

## Chapter 9: Star Wars: The Bad Batch Review



*Star Wars: The Bad Batch* is an action-adventure sci-fi animated series created by Dave Filoni. He is the creator of *Star Wars Resistance* and *Star Wars Rebels*, and supervising director of *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* and *Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi*. This series was produced by Lucasfilm Animation, which has headed all Star Wars-related animated series since 2008, a studio [built](#) "from the ground up" by Filoni. This review will have spoilers.

The plot of *Star Wars: The Bad Batch* focuses on a group of elite clone troopers (all voiced by Dee Bradley Baker), Hunter, Wrecker, Tech, and Echo, known as Clone Force 99. They become fugitives following the genocidal Order 66 to kill all Jedi as "traitors of the Republic". They join a genetically deviant clone and replicate of Jango Fett, who works as a medical assistant in Kamino, named Omega (voiced by Michelle Ang).

These characters form a family-of-sorts, akin to the "[Space Family](#)" in *Star Wars Rebels*, or the chosen family in *Star Wars Resistance*. This family, called the Bad Batch for short, faces adversity in the forms of their arduous mercenary jobs, avoidance of bounty hunters such as Fennec Shand (voiced by Ming Na-Wen), and their old clone brother, Crosshair (voiced by Baker), both of whom have it out for them.

The latter becomes part of the newly formed Galactic Empire, helping to restore order, headed by Darth Sidious/Emperor Palpatine (voiced by Ian McDiarmid). He is assisted by Admiral Tarkin (voiced by Stephen Stanton), a high-ranking officer in the Empire, and an

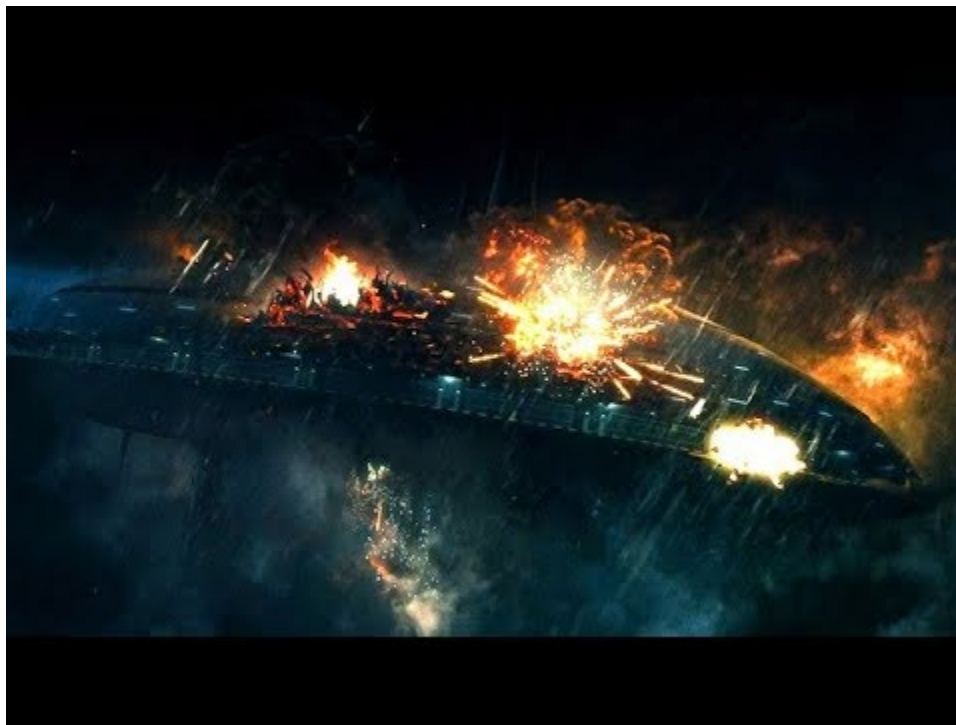


Imperial officer named Vice Admiral Rampart (voiced by Noshir Dalal), and new Imperial elite squad troopers.

The first season consists of the Bad Batch on the run from those accusing them of treason, gathering supplies, beginning their mercenary work with Cid (voiced by Rhea Perlman), removing their inhibitor chips, meeting with other renegade rebels (and clones), and fighting the Empire. All these actions strengthen their family-of-sorts as they are pulled into the criminal underworld of the galaxy. All the while, Tarkin and Rampart scheme to phase out the clones entirely with conscripts.

A major theme of *The Bad Batch* is the importance of cooperation and working together toward a common goal. Often this is to engage in mercenary missions, while the Bad Batch tries to figure out where their loyalties lie in early days of the Empire.

This is tested in the final two episodes of season one, with the tearful destruction of Kamino by the Empire, with Tipoca City falling into the sea, with the Bad Batch and Crosshair inside. They barely escape Kamino with their lives.



Throughout the series, the Bad Batch is shown as "good". In contrast, the Empire is portrayed as "evil", through their destruction of Kamino, a massacre of rebel forces ordered by Rampart, and capture of Nala Se (voiced by Gwendoline Yeo) as a scientist. The latter is

somewhat akin to what the U.S. did with Nazi scientists [in Operation Paperclip](#), following the end of World War II.

Furthermore, the Empire is portrayed as honoring order and stability, while cracking down on anyone who disobeys. This manifests in Rampart's idea of chain code registration system, which has the potential to create a database of everyone in the galaxy, and issuance of new currency. Everything is done to erase the Republic and replace it with the Empire. Even one clone commander, Wilco (voiced by Baker) who refuses to falsify a report is killed at gunpoint by Rampart.

The Bad Batch and Omega resist these measures. They indirectly battle the Empire through daring actions, leading to countless near-death experiences. In the process, any past allegiance to the Republic fades away as battle droids fight on their behalf in one episode and they rescue a former Separatist politician in another.

The second season of *The Bad Batch* brings a host of new characters to enliven the cast, including a pirate, voiced by Wanda Sykes, named Phee Genoa. She gives the Bad Batch a tip on the location of Count Dooku's former war chest, which portends freeing them from Sid (and the criminal underworld), allowing them to begin their own future. Like many aspects of the show, nothing is that simple. At the same time, they occasionally have to free Sid from her lapses of judgment.

Both the Bad Batch and the show's villains prove to be highly relatable characters. This includes Crosshair, who seriously questions his loyalty to the Empire after a mission [with Commander Cody](#) (voiced by Baker) to free a kidnapped imperial governor, Grotton (voiced by Max Mittelman). He is held hostage by the Desix system governor, Tawni Ames (voiced by Tasia Valenza). She opposes the Empire's occupation and hopes to use the kidnapping of Grotton as leverage, and a bargaining chip, to convince the Empire to recognize them as an independent system. However, the Imperials will not let this "dissent" stand.

Ultimately, by the end of the second season's third episode, the elite Imperial force led by Cody and Crosshair overthrows a legitimate government, after Crosshair shoots Ames in the head (shown below). The Empire then occupies the planet by military force, scaring the populace. In many ways, the common refrain of "good soldiers follow orders" comes back to haunt him, as he is all alone, with no one to bear the brunt of his actions except himself.

While the story of *The Bad Batch* feels somewhat familiar, in some ways, to previous Star Wars series, it is also new and different, with various moral quandaries and huge action sequences. While the protagonists of *The Bad Batch* could be seen as predictable and banal each clone has a unique personality, especially since all of them share the characteristic of being “defective.”



*The Bad Batch* was simply a sequel and spinoff to *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. Jennifer Corbett remained the head writer and Brad Rau as the supervising director, as they were in the other series. Like the aforementioned series, the value of fighting for what is right is emphasized. The importance of preserving history is emphasized, including by a Serenno local, Romar Adell (voiced by Héctor Elizondo) who has a datacore holding records of the culture, art, music, and memories of his people.

Unlike *Star Wars: Clone Wars*, *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, *Star Wars Rebels*, *Tales of the Jedi*, and *Young Jedi Adventures*, the Jedi are not a major part of the series. That sets it apart in many ways. Even so, *The Bad Batch* has still garnered praise for hiring female-identifying people, and has received an award in sound editing.

Apart from Ang, who is of Malaysian Chinese descent, the series voice cast is composed of actors with Singaporean, Iranian, Japanese, Jamaican, Haitian, Taiwanese, Puerto Rican, and Dominican roots. It also includes those with Indian, Chinese, Sudanese, and Maori ancestry,

along with a few Black actors, such as Phil LaMarr, Dahéli Hall, and Sykes, with Sykes and LaMarr as two of the most well-known of the lot.

Unfortunately, these cast members only comprise about 25% of the total cast, including starring, recurring, and guest characters. Instead, many of the characters are either White men (like Baker, who voices 11 clone troopers) or White women. Although the series has as much diversity in its cast [as \*Star Wars Resistance\*](#), an often overlooked animated series which stands out with its diverse cast, *The Bad Batch* tends to reinforce the Whiteness which is often present in Star Wars films.

This is because *Resistance* features Black actors (Suzie McGrath, Scott Lawrence, Gary Anthony Williams, Daveed Diggs, and Donald Faison), those of Filipino and Indian ancestry (Sumalee Montano and Nazneen Contractor), Chinese ancestry (Nikki SooHoo and Tzi Ma), Mexican ancestry (Myrna Velasco and Jason Hightower), Costa Rican ancestry (Tasia Valenza) and Japanese ancestry (Sean Christopher). Of these characters, all but six are in the main cast. In contrast, *The Bad Batch* effectively features four White men and one person of color, in the main cast, meaning that racial diversity of the series is reduced as compared to *Resistance*.

Although *The Bad Batch* has no LGBTQ+ characters, [reportedly](#) typical of Filoni productions, even while some fans argued that Omega is either intersex or a trans woman, it shares one aspect with *Resistance*: romance is not a big part of the series. That contrasts with *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* and *Star Wars: Clone Wars*, which have scenes showing the secret relationship between Anakin Skywalker and Padme Amidala.

Otherwise, while it is strange that Omega is older than the rogue clones she is with, but still is portrayed as a little kid (due to her height), she does mature over the course of the series. She becomes surer of herself, even though she takes foolish risks which put her in harm's way.

In addition, *Resistance* features a gay couple (Ortka and Flix), as did *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, with a brief lesbian couple (Cassie Cryar and Ione Marcy). Both subtle portrayals were confirmed outside the show, however: Lucasfilm creative executive Pablo Hidalgo [confirmed](#) the latter, and executive producer Justin Ridge confirmed the former [in a podcast](#). Apart from these instances, LGBTQ+ characters in Star Wars have primarily [been relegated](#) to comics and graphic novels – with a recent live-action queer couple confirmed (and playing a key supporting role, unlike in some blink and you missed it elements of *Star Wars* live action films)

in the recent series *Andor*. Hopefully future episodes of *The Bad Batch* bring in such characters, although I am not optimistic this will happen.

Despite my criticisms of *The Bad Batch* for its lack of diversity, LGBTQ+ characters, and falling into common tropes, the series still has its positives, especially when it comes to the chosen family Omega has formed with four rogue clones, and the emphasis on tricky moral quandaries.

*Star Wars: The Bad Batch* is currently streaming on Disney+.

© 2022-2023 Burkely Hermann. All rights reserved.

Animation	★★★★★
Voice Acting	★★★★★
Music	★★★★☆
Story	★★★★☆
4.5	
★★★★☆	



## Chapter 10: Kiff Review



*Kiff* is a musical comedy animated series by Lucy Heavens and Nic Smal. They are known for their work in the animation industry, either script writing, storyboarding, or voice acting. This post will have spoilers.

The plot of *Kiff* focuses on a young flying squirrel named Kiff Chatterley (voiced by Kimiko Glenn), who is friends with a mellow bunny named Barry Buns (H. Michael Croner) in a magical land, within the mountains, known as Table Town. Both go on adventures in and around the town.

Like other Disney series airing this year, *Kiff* is aimed at kids and families. This is clear from the format, similar to many episodes of [\*Amphibia\*](#), [\*Milo Murphy's Law\*](#), and [\*Phineas and Ferb\*](#). Each 22-minute episode is divided into two 11-minute segments. In typical Disney fashion, there is a musical number in almost every episode.

Apart from the animating powerhouse of Disney Television Animation, a well-known animation studio, Titmouse, is producing the series. The same studio is known for series such as *[Cleopatra in Space](#)*, *[Star Trek: Lower Decks](#)*, *The Midnight Gospel*, *Q-Force*, *[Inside Job](#)*, *Pantheon*, *[My Dad the Bounty Hunter](#)*, *The Legend of Vox Machina*, *Fairfax*, and *Chicago Party Aunt*.

Many of the voice actors in *Kiff* are well-experienced. Glenn previously voiced Paperstar [in \*Carmen Sandiego\*](#), Katherine-Alice in *Welcome to the Wayne*, Tomiko in *Elena of Avalor*, and Nomi in *Dogs in Space*, to name a few roles. Deedee Magno Hall, who voices Deer Teacher in the series, is best known for voicing Pearl in *Steven Universe*. Furthermore, James Monroe Iglehart and Lauren Ash, who voice Kiff's parents, prominently voiced characters in series such as *Tangled*, [Helluva Boss](#), *Elena of Avalor*, and *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*.

Keen listeners might recognize Rachel House, voice of Barry's mother, or Nichole Sakura, voice of Barry's sister. Both had prominent voice roles in *Moana* and *OK K.O.! Let's Be Heroes*. Personally, I was familiar with voice actors Katie Crown and Rhys Darby because they voiced characters in *Cleopatra in Space*. The former also voiced Ivy in *Amphibia*. Furthermore, Darby voiced a variety of characters in *Milo Murphy's Law*, *We Bare Bears*, *Welcome to the Wayne*, *Star vs. the Forces of Evil*, and *Infinity Train*. It was great to hear Vella Vowell, who voices Candle Fox, again. I remembered her impressive voice acting as Princess Mermista in *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power* and as the No Tattoo Barista (which later turned into a CBD Monster) in the lesser-known *Magical Girl Friendship Squad*.

*Kiff* snagged the well-regarded Eric Bauza and Tom Kenny. From my years of watching animated series, I was familiar with Bauza as Scoops [in \*Ollie & Scoops\*](#), as well as Kenny for two roles: Ice King in *Adventure Time* and Yancy Fry in *Futurama*. In this series, Bauza voices Reggie and a scrupulous TV producer named Roy Fox, while Kenny voices multiple characters in the series. A stand-up comedian named Josh Johnson also voices Barry's brother, Harry.



The show's animation is expressive and colorful. However, it pales in comparison to *Amphibia*, *The Owl House*, or *Adventure Time*. In some ways, *Phineas and Ferb* is put together better, as is *Milo Murphy's Law*. All in all, the show is a bit funny, but not laugh-out-loud funny. Drama is more a strong suit for the series than comedy.

The first twelve episodes of the series are double episodes. They introduce viewers to the characters, allowing you to get a feeling for their lives. More than anything, they make it clear that *Kiff* is not serialized like *Steven Universe*, *Tangled*, or *Milo Murphy's Law* (especially the second season). Instead, each episode seems in its own world, without being connected to another. If some rumors are correct about upcoming *Hailey's On It!* and *Iwaju*, it appears that Disney series are moving in this direction. This is evidenced by the fact that the recently aired *Moon Girl and Devil Dinosaur* uses serialized storytelling.

*Kiff* has some elements reminding me of the *Futurama* episode openings, like fake adverts at the beginning of each episode. At the same time, the series is different than what has come before since the show creators, Heavens and Smal, who voice characters in the series, are [from Cape Town, South Africa](#). As a result, their life-stories are undoubtedly integrated into the series itself. Furthermore, the show's directors include animators for *Black Dynamite*, *6Teen*, and *Amphibia*, with this career experience enhancing the show even more.

The series emphasizes the importance of acceptance, friendship, self-worth, and notoriety. The latter is shown in the extreme by Roy Fox, who makes trashy reality shows to profit from people's misery. In a manner like the focus on education in many anime series, *Kiff* seems to imply that education is important to achieving your dreams and that school shouldn't be skipped, no matter what. This stands diametrically opposed to what is shown [in \*Birdie Wing\*](#): Eve, one of the show's protagonists, is a terrible student, but remains at the premiere golf academy because she is a sports star.

There are many other themes focused in *Kiff*. For instance, the episode "Career Day", when Kiff and Barry get a part-time job at city hall, implies that mass records destruction is fine if you cut through the "red tape". This contrasts [with commentary](#) about overly technical bureaucracy in *Hilda* and *Futurama*, to name two series. Such a negative theme in "Career Day" is offset by episodes which accentuate family togetherness and honesty.

As a person who has reviewed media with libraries and librarians in pop culture [since July 2020](#), and with a MLIS degree, it should be no surprise one of my favorite episodes of *Kiff* was "Club Book". In that episode, Kiff learns the value of quietness in the library after turning the library into a club scene. I thought it was interesting that [the librarian](#), voiced by Aparna Nancherla, is made more relatable than most. Her character, Miss Moufflé, somewhat bucking stereotypes, while reinforcing them at the same time, as she shushes people but also likes souffles.

Similar to [other series](#), the value of libraries as a place of [knowledge and learning](#) is affirmed in *Kiff*. In some ways, the episode reminded me of the "Quiet Riot" episode of *The Replacements*, in which the show's protagonist, Todd, causes the shushing librarian in charge of the school library [replaced](#) by a rockstar. However, he later regrets his decision, resulting in the original librarian returning to her job.





Currently, *Kiff* is almost half-way through its series order [of 30 episodes](#). It is hard to know where the series will go from here. Even so, I am more optimistic about this series [than \*Hamster & Gretel\*](#), which has fallen flat, despite the fact that Dan Povenmire is the show's creator. Instead, the series has episodes somewhat mimicking absurdity and, even hilarity (to an extent), which are present in *Phineas and Ferb*. The latter, in fact, was [recently renewed](#) for more two seasons.

Even so, *Kiff* will probably never measure-up to the strength of four-season animated magical comedy powerhouse of *Phineas and Ferb*, a series even mentioned in an episode of *Better Things*, a comedy-drama by Pamela Adlon, who voiced some characters in the series. Despite this, *Kiff* will chart its own path, perhaps different than what has come before. After all, both creators are [said](#) to be a "brilliant creative team".

Although Disney has recently removed release dates from the upcoming *Tiana* and *Moana* series, clearly *Kiff* is part of a trend by the company to feature more diverse series. This year is bound to bring series such as *Iwájú* and *Hailey's On It!*, while there are others in production such as *Cookies & Milk* and *Primos*.

It is further [possible](#) that Disney [is producing](#) Molly Ostertag's [Neon Galaxy](#), a series [reportedly](#) about a trans princess. In any case, diverse series are on the horizon for Disney, especially more than HBO Max, a network which has been struggling to find its corporate



identity since David Zaslav became CEO of Warner Bros. Discovery conglomerate. It is said that the streaming service [has](#) *Iyanu: Child of Wonder* and *Lumberjanes* [in production](#).

The first 12 episodes of *Kiff* are currently airing on Disney+ and all twelve episodes have aired on the Disney Channel. Four new episodes will air on the Disney Channel on April 1st and later be added on Disney+.

Animation	★★★★★
Voice Acting	★★★★★
Music	★★★★★
Story	★★★★★
3.3	
★★★★★	

© 2023 Burkely Hermann. All rights reserved.

## Concluding Words

After putting this together, I am inspired to write even more animated series.

For the third chapter, OmuFloof/Khai told me that he was giving me constructive criticism of my article, telling me to avoid "dense cast lists and plot summaries", that I apparently had a "pretty skewed hits to bounce ratio", meaning that people read and "then leave quickly", and saying that I needed to have better intros. He called for me to "inject" my "unique voice and personality" into my articles, saying the reader base of *The Geekiary* is "heavily personality-driven", and saying he wanted a "lower bounce rate" on my articles. I saw where he was coming from, and he added that the editors wanted me to share my "passion and...love of fandom", suggesting I read articles aloud. He said that he wasn't singling me out and added that I have to make people "want to watch", making the review a "compelling read". Another of the editors, Jamie, was going to message me about the article, but that never happened. After reading what he said, I re-submitted the article on August 27. I was confident I had done everything right. The article got sent back, again. Khai asked to talk to me again. There were some messages back-and-forth on August 30th and 31st. There weren't many messages in September. Khai sent nothing while I was on vacation for much of September. On October 1, I tried to encourage him to respond back. He said he needed to have an "actual conversation" with me, saying he "didn't do a good job at explaining the issues". I proposed some times to talk, on October 7, but he never responded. The conversation continued after that time. There were messages back and forth in October and November. Tired of the fact that long-running conversation seemed to be getting nowhere, on December 31, I pulled the article and resigned from *The Geekiary*. I didn't want to do so, but felt I had no choice in the matter. I am proud of what I wrote for the publication, but would never write for them again, or recommend anyone else do so.

- Burkely

####